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PRIDE 2007

COMPLETE COVERAGE OF ATLANTA'S GAYEST WEEKEND

Entertainment

Nightlife

Events

June 22, 2007

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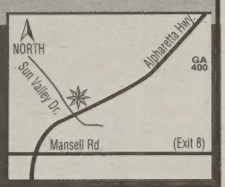

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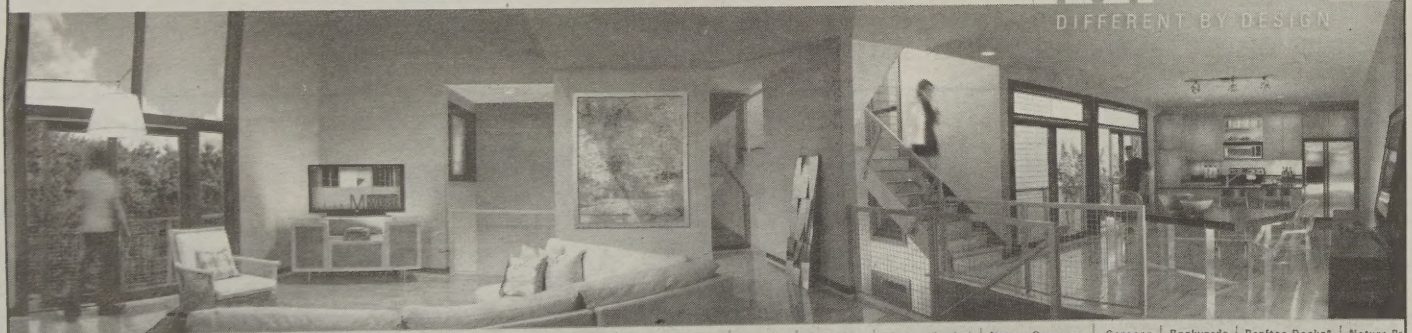

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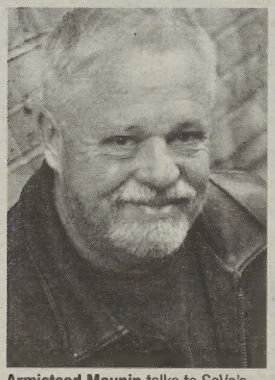

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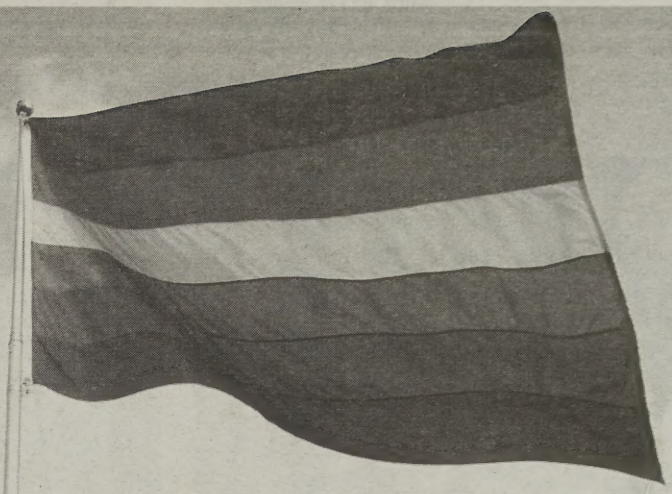

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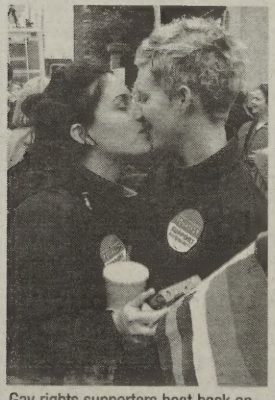

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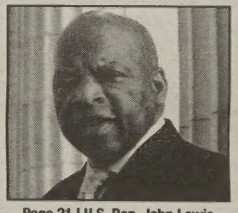

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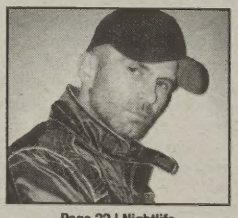

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DEBORAH does Pride

Pop, Broadway chanteuse credits gay fans for her longevity

By ZACK HUDSON
zhudson@sovo.com

DEBORAH GIBSON. ALL IT TAKES IS THE MENTION OF HER NAME, AND GAY MEN and lesbians of a certain age start rattling off a familiar script.

"Oh my God! I used to have her poster/cassette tape/Electric Youth perfume!"

Check.

She was an uber-successful teen pop singing sensation during the late 1980s and pre-grunge 1990s.

"She'll always be Debbie to me."

Check.

She changed her name from Deborah, the moniker she always preferred and used at home, to Debbie at the beginning of her career under record company pressure.

So she "totally understands and totally gets" why people still call her Debbie, even a decade after reapplying her given name, the singer tells Southern Voice.

"I really thought she and Tiffany and the New Kids would change the face of music."

Okay, maybe you should check yourself.

Deborah Gibson often played to the same crowds as her pre-fab colleagues, but she left the New Kids and others of that ilk hung out to dry in contests of talent. She worked the bright, well scrubbed face, and slick dance moves of teen pop comrades, but she wrote her own songs — all of them, and most often, by herself.

In 1987 — at age 16 — Gibson set a still-standing recording industry record as the youngest person ever to write, record and produce a number one single, "Foolish Beat."

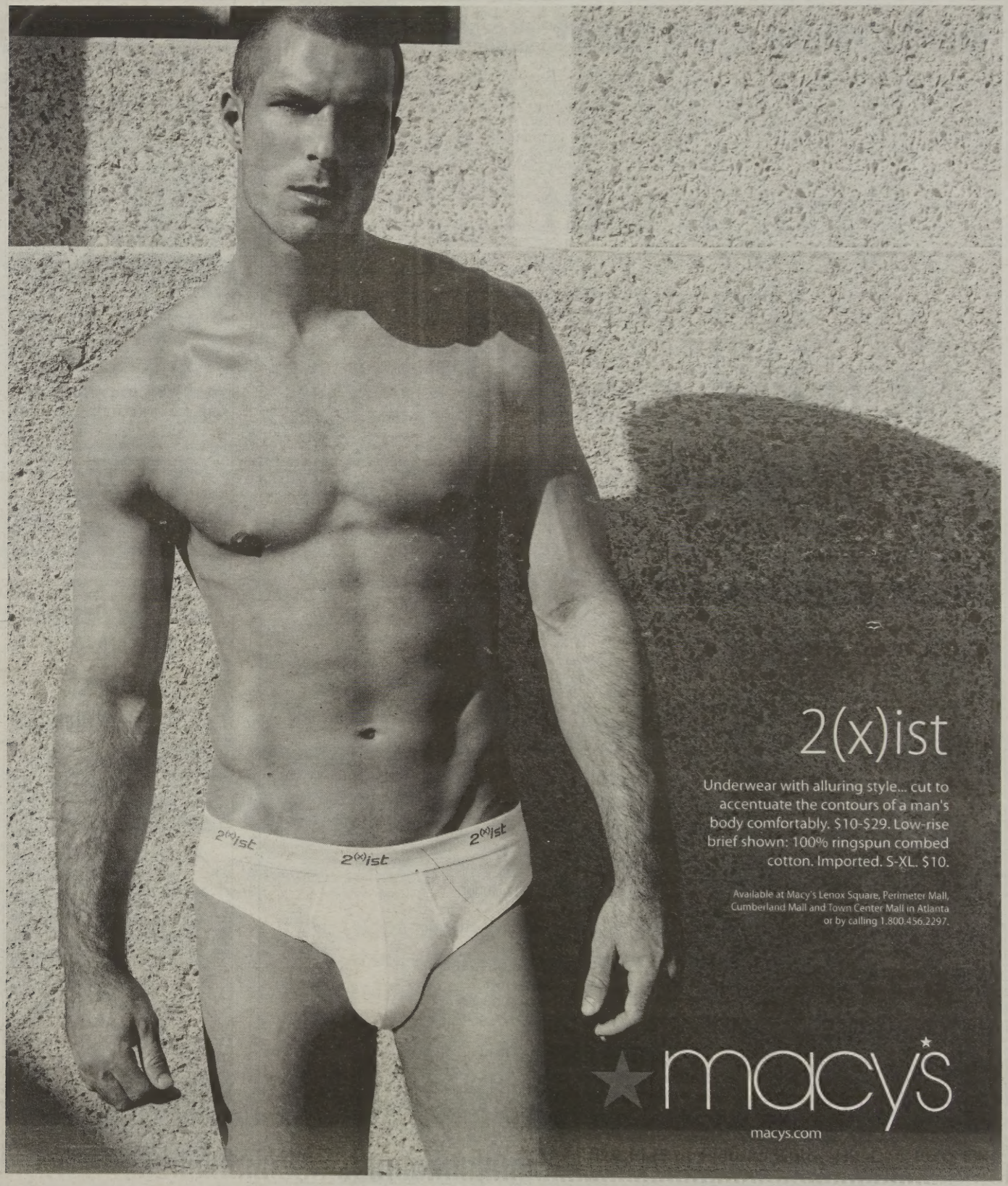
The song hits its nineteenth anniversary of reaching the top spot during Atlanta Pride, the same week Gibson, 36, takes the Pride main stage.

"Summer comes, and I always say it's my high season," she says through laughter. She works the Pride festival circuit often because gay fans never forgot her, she says.

"The gay audience, which is probably 75 percent of my audience, keeps me on stages across the country all year round," she says.

Please see **GIBSON** on **Page 9**

Singer-songwriter **Deborah Gibson** brings her show, a mix of hits and showtunes, to loyal gay fans during Atlanta Pride.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Gibson much more than teen pop sensation

GIBSON, continued from **Page 6**

And they've been with her since the start. As a teen, she played '80s dance clubs, where there were plenty of gay fans.

"I used to play a teen club, a straight club, and a gay club all in one night," she remembers. "And I always couldn't wait until I got to the gay club because the fans were the best — certainly the most fun — out of the three."

When **Deborah Gibson**'s pop success began to wane, she found a new career on Broadway.

WHEN THE ROLLER COASTER OF STADIUM TOURS and triple-platinum album sales lost steam in the early 1990s, Gibson took to the Broadway boards, first as Eponine in "Les Miserables." She subsequently carved out a career as a respected theater performer.

"People will ask me in a sorrowful voice, 'Oh, what was it like when you didn't have hit records.' And I'm asking them, 'You mean in the month's transition from being on tour and starring on Broadway?'" she says.

"Everybody's low point should be starring on Broadway," she chuckles.

Some 15 years later, she's still working in theater, as a composer and lyricist for "The Flunky," a soon-to-be work-shopped original production. She has one musical, "Skirts," currently shelved for time constraints, and "Electric Youth: The Musical," a show that uses her pop hits to move the story a la "Mamma Mia," is on stage in Florida.

A 2004 run as Sally Bowles in a Broadway revival of "Cabaret" was her high point on stage so far.

"I always called myself the accidental actress," Gibson says. "I never really believed I was an actress until that role. So twelve years after starting on Broadway, I felt I finally came into my own."

She's also trying to follow in the footsteps of Elton John, Cher and Celine Dion, by taking her act to Vegas.

"The president of this major hotel was so interested to learn that I have such a big gay following," she says. "It's so important to me emotionally, but also on a business level. I think the gay audience is very loyal, and I think a lot of people know that."

These days, Gibson's show is simple and essential. She blends her dance-pop hits with recognizable Broadway numbers and her signature piano ballads. Each performance is unique, she says, because she changes the songs according to the whims of the crowds.

"My poor assistant-slash-road manager runs sound," she says. "I'll have to give him hand signals about which tracks to run, because I try to leave in options to be spontaneous and play just based on the audience."

GIBSON REMAINS — AS SHE STARTED OUT — a tee-totaler — shying away from alcohol and drugs.

"You know all those videos they show you in school to keep you away from drinking and drugs? They worked on me. They totally worked on me," she says.

Where her contemporaries often found their fifteen minutes of fame extended by high-profile run-ins with the law and bad living, Gibson lived through little in the way of public embarrassment. She posed topless for Playboy in 2005 to little controversy. Her love life, though she has dated other Hollywood types, rarely makes headlines either.

"Scandal is really good for hit records, and I didn't have it," she laughs.

"I've gone on indie film auditions, and they're looking to see what tabloid actors have been in lately, because they think it will help their box office draw, and I think, 'Oh, I've been going about this all wrong. I've been taking acting classes'," she jokes.

MORE INFO:

Deborah Gibson plays Atlanta Pride
Sunday, June 24
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www.atlantapride.org
www.deborah-gibson.com

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Pride performers hope to dodge the rain

Atlanta acts, variety of genres showcased on festival stages

By RYAN LEE and JIM FARMER

About the only bright side to torrential storms washing out much of last year's entertainment line-up at Pride is that this year has to be better.

"Considering last year we didn't even get to perform because the stage collapsed, I think we're ready more than ever to give Atlanta a great show," says Jason Warner, one-half of the gay Christian pop/rock duo Jason & deMarco. The duo — who are romantic partners as well as musical ones — plays the Coca Cola stage at 5 p.m. on Saturday.

The pair was scheduled to headline Atlanta Pride last year, but hours before their Friday night set, fierce winds and pouring rain caused the main stage in Piedmont Park to collapse. The accident wound up canceling Jason & deMarco's performance, clearing the park and sending throngs of parties to gay and lesbian bars like My Sisters' Room.

"We were playing at My Sisters' Room that Friday and the storm shuffled everybody over there, and so it was a plus for us — but I really felt bad for the artists who didn't get a chance to play at all," says Jennifer Lowe, a member of the all-girl band Butterfly Stitch.

Butterfly Stitch, one of the few acts not rained out at last year's Pride, performs Friday night on the Washington Mutual stage. (Photo by David Eseray)

Lowe and her band mates — Sonia Leigh and former "American Idol" contestant Vanessa Olivarez — were one of the few musical acts able to squeeze in a few songs during last year's festival. Their acoustic set was so well received by the Piedmont Park audience that they're also one of several acts to make a return appearance to Pride.

"[The Atlanta Pride committee] said they got so many requests to have us back after we played, and we're just so flattered that was even the case," Lowe says.

With the Butterfly Stitch girls playing the Washington Mutual stage at 9:10 p.m. on Friday, Lowe says the group thought of bringing along a back-up band to have an all-out rock concert at night. Instead, Butterfly Stitch is sticking with its acoustic act, and will be accompanied by mandolin player Tim Ussery.

"Just adding the sound of Tim on mandolin to our music is going to be a lot of fun," says Lowe, who adds that bringing in a back-up band would've made the show too high-maintenance.

"I think we are better when we keep it laid-back," she says. "It lets us be goofy on stage, play around a little bit — have a little fun with it."

Also playing on opening night of this year's festival are Pride veterans Eric Himan and Deb Hunseder.

""Oh my god, Atlanta is my favorite pride," says Hunseder, who plays the Washington Mutual stage at 10:05 p.m. June 22. "The volume, the love, the energy, the professionalism — it's great."

Himan, who plays at 8:20 p.m. on June 22, concurs.

"People talk a lot about LA and New York Pride but to me nothing is like Atlanta," Himan says. "It's a little more laidback and always goes off well."

GEORGIA ACTS Butterfly Stitch is only one of several local acts scheduled to rock out for this year's Pride crowd.

The Washington Mutual stage — located near Piedmont Park's tennis courts near the stairs to the Botanical Gardens — features plenty of Georgia musicians through-

Please see **CONCERTS** on **Page 14**

FRIDAY JUNE 22

Washington Mutual stage
6:45 p.m. The Jolee Project
7:30 p.m. Jessi Lynn
8:20 p.m. Eric Himan
9:10 p.m. Butterfly Stitch
10:05 p.m. Deb Hunseder

SATURDAY JUNE 23

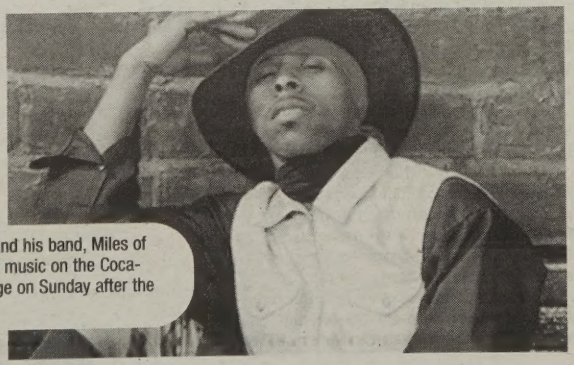
Coca Cola stage
3 p.m. Mosadi Music
4 p.m. Heidi Hensley w/ Holly Belle
5 p.m. Jason & deMarco
6 p.m. 13 Stories
6:55 p.m. After August
8:15 p.m. Three5Human
9:35 p.m. Antigone Rising

Washington Mutual stage
12:30 p.m. The Morgan Rowe Band
1:15 p.m. Athens Boys Choir
2:15 p.m. Rock, Rhythm & Rhyme Café
5:30 p.m. DJ Robbie Russell
6:15 p.m. Blue Motion Squared fashion show

SUNDAY JUNE 24

Coca Cola stage
3:30 p.m. Stoni Taylor & Miles of Stone
4:25 p.m. Ira Levi
5:15 p.m. Levi Kreis
6:10 p.m. Deborah Gibson
7:10 p.m. Michel Jons Band
8:30 p.m. Starlight cabaret

Washington Mutual stage
3 p.m. Social Insecurity
3:45 p.m. Tiffany Washington
4:30 p.m. DaLyrical
5:15 p.m. Bria



Stoni Taylor and his band, Miles of Stone, kick off music on the Coca-Cola main stage on Sunday after the Pride Parade.

PET OF THE WEEK
MAXX
BREED: Who knows?
AGE: 3
FAVORITE PLACE: Snuggling in bed with my handsome dad
DISLIKES: Humans who treat melike a baby and don't realize my Napoleon complex makes me want to play with the big boys
PHILOSOPHY: Put your paws up and step away from my Kong.
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Diverse acts rock Pride stages all weekend

CONCERTS, continued from **Page 10**

out the weekend, including a number of acts who were scheduled to perform last year but were rained out.

The Saturday line-up at the WaMu stage begins with the Morgan Rowe Band at 12:30 p.m. The group's namesake and lead singer, Morgan Rowe, recently brought her folksy act to Atlanta from her native Washington D.C.

The always-eclectic Athens Boys Choir follows Morgan Rowe on the WaMu stage, performing at 1:15 p.m. The one-man choir — aka Katz — says Pride is one of his favorite spots to perform.

"It's awesome," says Katz, who is transgender. "It's one of the biggest venues I play, in terms of the masses of people and the diversity of the crowd."

Katz describes the act as "mostly spoken word – witty, hard-hitting, about politics and sex."

"I always do openly queer stuff, wherever I perform," he says. "But I mix it with humor. I think that people who don't normally like spoken word can enjoy what I do."

The local production company Felicity Nuance teams with WRFG's "Alternative Perspectives" radio show to continue the spoken word vibe after the Athens Boys Choir with an extended set of poetry, prose and music entitled "Rock, Rhythm & Rhyme Café." The neo-soul event goes down on the WaMu stage at 2:15 p.m. on June 23.

DJ Robbie Russell takes the Washington Mutual stage at 5:30 p.m. The Florida-to-Atlanta transplant will be playing his dance club song "Here With You," which he wrote two years after being diagnosed with a form of cancer known as Burkitt's lymphoma.

Katz, better known as Athens Boys Choir, takes his mostly spoken-word show to the Washington Mutual stage on Saturday.

"I didn't know if I was going to live or die or what was going to happen to me, so I used music as my outlet and wrote 'Here With You' within an hour," Russell says. "It's a song dealing with the uncertainties of life and knowing that everything will be OK — that problems in life will work out in the end."

Rounding out the Atlanta contingent on the WaMu stage Saturday is Carey Sherrell, who competed as an openly gay contestant on season six of "The Apprentice." Sherrell will be showcasing the fabulously queer swimwear line that got him booted from "The Apprentice," his own Blue Motion Squared.

"It's very meaningful to be able to do this, more meaningful than people know," Sherrell says of Pride. "It makes it full circle. I came out in Atlanta and now I am able to do this. It's very humbling,"

APPRENTICE ALUM OPENS FOR GIBSON

Sherrell isn't the only alum from Donald Trump's reality TV show making an appearance at Atlanta Pride this year, as Levi Kreis returns to the Coca Cola stage on Sunday after wowing the Atlanta crowd with his piano prowess last year.

Kreis, whose musical star skyrocketed after a stellar guest performance during season four of "The Apprentice" in 2005, serves as the warm-up act for this year's Pride headliner, Deborah Gibson **(See story, Page 6)**.

Also performing on the Coca-Cola stage on Sunday is Stoni Taylor & Miles of Stone — an Atlanta rock and soul band headed by the sexy Stoni Taylor. The group kicks off the final day of concerts at 3:30 p.m., immediately following the Pride Parade.

Stoni Taylor and anyone else who's ever attended Atlanta Pride, will undoubtedly be praying the rain does not make its regular appearance around that time.

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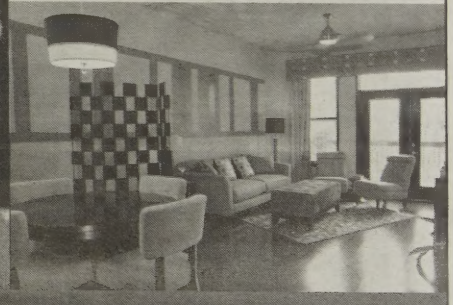

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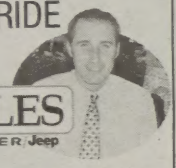

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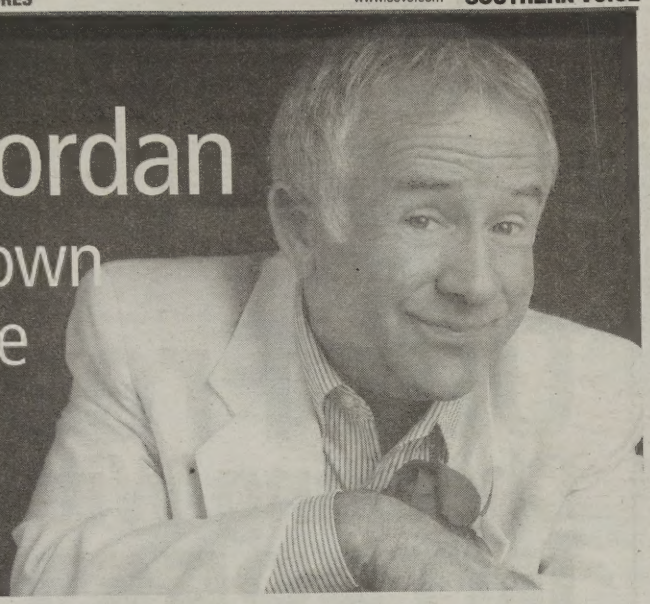
Leslie Jordan adds his own color to Pride



Gay comedian **Leslie Jordan** brings his larger-than-life persona to Atlanta for Pride.

Gay Emmy-winning actor to headline first-ever Pride movie night

By MATT HENNIE

Leslie Jordan might as well buy a vacation home in Atlanta.

The Emmy-winning gay actor and comedian, well known for his recurring Beverley Leslie character on "Will & Grace," has filled the chairs at 14th Street Playhouse with his one-man show, revitalized the gay country bar Hoedowns with his stand-up and dropped a few bills on strippers at Swinging Richards all in the last year or so.

He's not done yet.

Jordan, who first came to Atlanta in the mid-1970s, returns for Pride, headlining a first-ever Pride Movie Night with Lady Chablis and Charlie Brown. The trio will be on-hand for fans screening "Sordid Lives," the 2000 movie in which Jordan played Brother Boy, and "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," the 1997 drama that included Lady Chablis. He will also ride in the parade on Sunday.

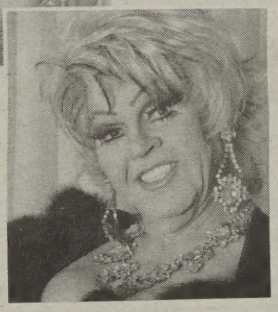
"It will be pure chaos," Jordan said. "It will be a dog and pony show. I love to spar with Lady Chablis. And I've known Charlie Brown since 1983. That whore is as old as me. You are free to print that."

Looking to add new entertainment to Pride, organizers came up with the idea to open the festival with a movie screening, according to Jennifer Sheffield, Pride's programming director. Someone suggested "Sordid Lives," and as organizers were considering the gay favorite, Hoedowns — which hosts Jordan for a monthly stand-up comedy appearance — called in search of a higher-profile role for Pride.

Details then came together quickly, Sheffield said.

"We really hope that people enjoy it. Anytime we try something for the first time, we are going to have jitters about it," she said.

Jitters, though, are something Jordan dispensed with years ago. Or at least soon after his appearance as the killer Malone on "The Fall Guy" in 1986.



Georgia legends **Lady Chablis** (above) and **Charlie Brown** (right) join Leslie Jordan to host Pride's first-ever gay movie night in Piedmont Park.

"I am scared to death of [series star] Lee Majors. He is so butch. I was so scared to death of him that I hid in my trailer," Jordan said.

There were also his two appearances in 1993 as Alan Morris in "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman." Yes, that's the one with Dean Cain, the hunk who later won over gay fans with his role in the romantic comedy "The Broken Hearts Club."

"I had this huge crush on him. His Superman suit was a polyester blend that did not breathe. He would get really hot and slip his arms down and roll it down. All I have to say is, 'Thank you lord for polyester suits that don't breathe.'"

Even though "Will & Grace" ended its eight-year run on NBC last year, Jordan hasn't slowed down. He's busy these days working on "My Trip Down the Pink Carpet – Or How I Became Insufferably Satisfied with Myself," a book due out next April that chronicles his years as an openly gay actor and the funny stories about people he works with in Hollywood.

Jordan is also collaborating with Del Shores, the playwright behind "Sordid Lives." The pair is creating an eight-episode TV version of the play and movie for Logo, with shooting to begin in August, he said. And squeezed in among those projects is raising funds for the under-development big screen version of "Southern Baptist Sissies" that will include Delta Burke.

The master storyteller is learning to become a master of his schedule.

"I've learned to sort of plan it all out with my Blackberry," Jordan said. "I just find the time and find the time for myself."

His troubles with drugs and alcohol well documented in his one-man show "Like a Dog on Linoleum," Jordan said he's not a fan of bars. But when in Atlanta, he still finds his way to the gay strip club.

"Bars bore me to death, but at least at Swinging Richards, I have something to look at. I am a man of a certain age, and I have a few dollars to give to those boys. I like the straight ones," he said.

The trips away from Los Angeles allow Jordan to experiment with his stand-up comedy, performances he doesn't give at home where he wants to be known as an actor. Or maybe it's because Jordan doesn't shy away from his colorful history or that he pulls no punches.

"I don't know why I have such a dirty mouth. I am such a show off," Jordan said.

MORE INFO

Pride Movie Night
'Sordid Lives' and 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil' with hosts Leslie Jordan, Lady Chablis and Charlie Brown
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Piedmont Park Meadow

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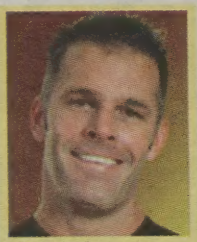
Designing a Home Gym

(Part 2 of 2)



Daniel Reynen
Certified Personal Trainer

Last issue, I went over several things you should consider before you purchase a home gym and the types of weight equipment available. This issue I'm going to tell you the 7 important things to consider when you're buying weight equipment.

Use First, decide what you're going to do with the equipment. If you plan on doing as much cardio as weight training, then dedicate an equal amount of space to each activity. If you want a circuit training routine, your machine should be easy to change from one exercise to another, so you don't lose the aerobic benefit. Bodybuilders might want to look more at free weights or weight stack machines. If you're just into conditioning, then piston or body weight machines could work well. Consider rubber band or flexible rod technology if you're not sure which way you want to go.

Space How much space do you have to dedicate to the equipment? Measure and write down the length, width, and height. Remember to give yourself enough room to get around the equipment once it's in place. Be sure to avoid lighting fixtures, air conditioning units, heaters, and ceiling fans. A good rule of thumb is that a single-station gym typically needs 35 square feet of space, while most multi-station models require 50 to 200 square feet. If you're considering equipment that requires electricity, make sure you have enough power available.

Setup Find out what tools you'll need to set the equipment up, how many pieces are in the boxes, and how long the manufacturer says it will take to build. Some machines can be assembled in as little as 10 or 20 minutes with half a dozen parts. The most complex have hundreds of parts and can take an entire day to put together. If you choose the latter, it's a good idea to pay for delivery and setup, if available. If not, make sure you have enough time and materials to build it when it arrives.

Portability If you're lucky enough to be able to dedicate an entire room to the equipment, portability isn't a concern. But if you live in a small space and you have to take the equipment out of a closet each day, then the set-up times shouldn't be more than a few minutes. Any more than that and you may find yourself with a closet full of equipment that you never use. If your equipment must share space with a home office or guest room, make sure you can get it out of the way or hide it when guests or business associates arrive.

Ergonomics Make sure the machine is designed with your comfort in mind. All moving pieces should move smoothly and friction free. Be sure you can adjust the machine to your height and weight, especially if you're taller or shorter than average. If you're not in a comfortable body position when performing the exercises, you risk injuring yourself. Finally, make sure the machine provides a full range of motion during every part of the workout.

Construction Look for a frame built with heavy gauge steel. It should be easy to lubricate any moving parts. If there are any bearings, they should all be sealed. Material covering seats or benches should be covered under warranty from cracking or flaking. Ask the manufacturer if they stock replacement materials and how long they'll remain available.

Your Brain Don't be taken in by fast-talking salespeople or believe ads that promise miracle results, such as being able to spot-reduce a specific part of your body. Read the fine print of all the warranties. Make sure you know exactly what the manufacturer will fix and under what circumstances. Consider the entire cost, including any shipping of heavy weights, setup, ongoing maintenance, and extended warranties.

When you're ready to move in your equipment, follow these 10 suggestions for creating a productive workout space.

1. Be cautious about setting up your workout space anywhere that smells moldy, such as a basement.
2. If you live in a humid environment, consider a dehumidifier for the workout room.
3. The workout space should have a flat indoor-outdoor carpet with a good pad for cushioning.
4. The carpets and drapes should be easy to clean and cleaned frequently.
5. If your equipment uses electricity make sure your space has enough outlets. Remember, you may want to play music and have a fan as well.
6. Hang or position mirrors in the room so that you can see if you're maintaining proper form while doing the various exercises.
7. If you plan on doing floor exercises that make you sweat (like push-ups), buy washable rugs or plastic exercise mats that you can wipe down.
8. Use an alcohol-based cleanser when wiping down equipment or mats. Avoid antibacterial cleaners because they can lead to the development of resistant germs.
9. Don't allow pets in your workout space.
10. Make sure the room is well ventilated.

Now that you know how to choose and set up your home gym, what are you waiting for?

Dan Reynen's Health and Fitness column is brought to you by Gilead Sciences.

For more health and fitness tips, visit www.WeBeFit.com

In combination with other antiretroviral

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USE OF TRUVADA:

TRUVADA is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents (such as non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors or protease inhibitors) for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults.

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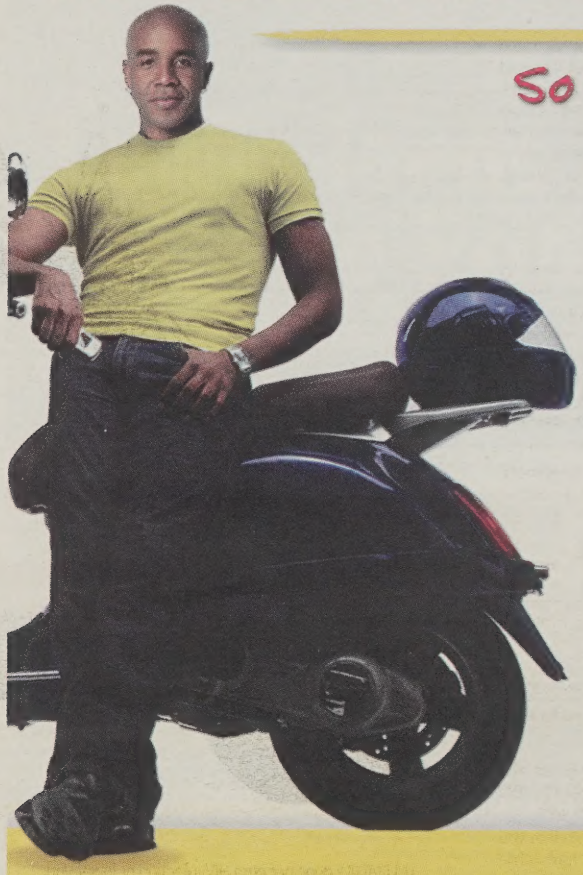

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

- **Lactic acidosis** (a buildup of acid in the blood) can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. **Call your healthcare provider right away** if you have nausea, vomiting, unusual muscle pain, and/or weakness
- **Serious liver problems** (hepatotoxicity), with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis), may occur. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have light colored stools, dark colored urine, and/or if your skin or the whites of your eyes turn yellow
- **Flare-ups of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection:** If you have HIV and HBV, your liver disease may suddenly get worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA unless directed by your healthcare provider
- Kidney problems: If you have had kidney problems or take other medicines that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider should do regular blood tests to check your kidneys
- Bone changes: It is not known whether long-term use of TRUVADA causes damage to your bones. If you have had bone problems in the past, talk to your healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA

Changes in body fat have been seen in some people taking anti-HIV medicines. The most common side effects of TRUVADA when taken with other anti-HIV medicines are dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, headache, abdominal pain, depression, rash, and gas. Skin discoloration (spots and freckles) may also occur.

Discuss all medicines you take with your healthcare provider and be aware:

- Your healthcare provider may need to follow you more closely or adjust your therapy if you are taking Videx®, Videx® EC, Reyataz®, or Kaletra® with TRUVADA

For more information, please visit **www.TRUVADA.com** or call **1-800-GILEAD-5 (1-800-445-3235)** and select option 2. **Please see Patient Information on the next page.**

*Based on data from PHAST retail monthly data, April 2005–February 2007, Wolters Kluwer Health.

Patient Information

TRUVADA® (tru-VAH-dah) Tablets

Generic name: emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate
(em tri SIT uh bean and te NOE fo veer dye soe PROX il FYOU mar ate)

Read the Patient Information that comes with TRUVADA before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. You should stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking TRUVADA. **Do not change or stop your medicine without first talking with your healthcare provider.** Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about TRUVADA.

What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA?

- **Some people who have taken medicine like TRUVADA (nucleoside analogs) have developed a serious condition called lactic acidosis** (build up of an acid in the blood). Lactic acidosis can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of lactic acidosis.**
  - You feel very weak or tired.
  - You have unusual (not normal) muscle pain.
  - You have trouble breathing.
  - You have stomach pain with nausea and vomiting.
  - You feel cold, especially in your arms and legs.
  - You feel dizzy or lightheaded.
  - You have a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Some people who have taken medicines like TRUVADA have developed serious liver problems called hepatotoxicity,** with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of liver problems.**
  - Your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice).
  - Your urine turns dark.
  - Your bowel movements (stools) turn light in color.
  - You don't feel like eating food for several days or longer.
  - You feel sick to your stomach (nausea).
  - You have lower stomach area (abdominal) pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking nucleoside analog medicines, like TRUVADA, for a long time.
- **TRUVADA is not for the treatment of Hepatitis B Virus infection (HBV).** Patients infected with both HBV and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) who take TRUVADA need close medical follow-up for several months after stopping treatment with TRUVADA. Follow-up includes medical exams and blood tests to check for HBV that could be getting worse. **Patients with Hepatitis B Virus infection, who take TRUVADA and then stop it, may get "flare-ups" of their hepatitis. A "flare-up" is when the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before.**

What is TRUVADA?

TRUVADA is a type of medicine called an HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI). TRUVADA contains 2 medicines, EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine) and VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, or tenofovir DF) combined in one pill. TRUVADA is always used with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people with HIV infection. TRUVADA is for adults age 18 and older. TRUVADA has not been studied in children under age 18 or adults over age 65.

HIV infection destroys CD4 (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. The immune system helps fight infection. After a large number of T cells are destroyed, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) develops.

TRUVADA helps block HIV reverse transcriptase, a chemical in your body (enzyme) that is needed for HIV to multiply. TRUVADA lowers the amount of HIV in the blood (viral load). TRUVADA may also help to increase the number of T cells (CD4 cells). Lowering the amount of HIV in the blood lowers the chance of death or infections that happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

TRUVADA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of TRUVADA are not known at this time. People taking TRUVADA may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Opportunistic infections are infections that develop because the immune system is weak. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium complex* (MAC) infection. **It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while taking TRUVADA.**

TRUVADA does not lower your chance of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never use or share dirty needles.

Who should not take TRUVADA?

- Do not take TRUVADA if you are allergic to TRUVADA or any of its ingredients. The active ingredients of TRUVADA are emtricitabine and tenofovir DF. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients.
- Do not take TRUVADA if you are already taking COMBIVIR®, EMTRIVA, EPIVIR®, EPIVIR-HBV®, EPZICOM™, TRIZIVIR®, or VIREAD because these medicines contain the same or similar active ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA?

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- **are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** We do not know if TRUVADA can harm your unborn child. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if TRUVADA is right for you. If you use TRUVADA while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can be on the TRUVADA Antiviral Pregnancy Registry.
- **are breast-feeding.** You should not breast feed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing the HIV virus to your baby. Also, it is not known if TRUVADA can pass into your breast milk and if it can harm your baby. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.
- **have kidney problems or are undergoing kidney dialysis treatment.**
- **have bone problems.**
- **have liver problems including Hepatitis B Virus infection.**

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- Drugs that contain didanosine (VIDEX®, VIDEX EC®). Tenofovir DF (a component of TRUVADA) may increase the amount of VIDEX in your blood. **You may need to be followed more carefully if you are taking TRUVADA and VIDEX together.**
- REYATAZ™ (atazanavir sulfate) or KALETRA® (lopinavir/ritonavir). These medicines may increase the amount of tenofovir DF (a component of TRUVADA) in your blood, which could result in more side effects. You may need to be followed more carefully if you are taking TRUVADA and REYATAZ or KALETRA together.

Keep a complete list of all the medicines that you take. Make a new list when medicines are added or stopped. Give copies of this list to all of your healthcare providers and pharmacist **every** time you visit your healthcare provider or fill a prescription.

How should I take TRUVADA?

- Take TRUVADA exactly as your healthcare provider prescribed it. Follow the directions from your healthcare provider, exactly as written on the label.
- The usual dose of TRUVADA is 1 tablet once a day. TRUVADA is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. If you have kidney problems, you may need to take TRUVADA less often.
- TRUVADA may be taken with or without a meal. Food does not affect how TRUVADA works. Take TRUVADA at the same time each day.
- If you forget to take TRUVADA, take it as soon as you remember that day. **Do not** take more than 1 dose of TRUVADA in a day. **Do not** take 2 doses at the same time. Call your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are not sure what to do. **It is important that you do not miss any doses of TRUVADA or your anti-HIV medicines.**
- When your TRUVADA supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to TRUVADA and become harder to treat.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking TRUVADA without first talking with your healthcare provider. Stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking TRUVADA.
- If you take too much TRUVADA, call your local poison control center or emergency room right away.

What should I avoid while taking TRUVADA?

- **Do not breast-feed.** See "What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA?"
- **Avoid doing things that can spread HIV infection** since TRUVADA does not stop you from passing the HIV infection to others.
  - **Do not share needles or other injection equipment.**
  - **Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes or razor blades.**
  - **Do not have any kind of sex without protection.** Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to reduce the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.
- COMBIVIR, EMTRIVA, EPIVIR, EPIVIR-HBV, EPZICOM, TRIZIVIR, or VIREAD. **TRUVADA should not be used with these medicines.**

What are the possible side effects of TRUVADA?

TRUVADA may cause the following serious side effects (see "What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA?"):

- **Lactic acidosis** (buildup of an acid in the blood). Lactic acidosis can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. **Call your doctor right away if you get signs of lactic acidosis.** (See "What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA?")
- **Serious liver problems (hepatotoxicity),** with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis). Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any signs of liver problems. (See "What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA?")
- **"Flare-ups" of Hepatitis B Virus infection,** in which the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before, can occur if you stop taking TRUVADA. Your healthcare provider will monitor your condition for several months after stopping TRUVADA if you have both HIV and HBV infection. TRUVADA is not for the treatment of Hepatitis B Virus infection.
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Other side effects with TRUVADA when used with other anti-HIV medicines include:

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These are not all the side effects of TRUVADA. This list of side effects with TRUVADA is **not complete** at this time because TRUVADA is still being studied. If you have questions about side effects, ask your healthcare provider. Report any new or continuing symptoms to your healthcare provider right away. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you manage these side effects.

How do I store TRUVADA?

- **Keep TRUVADA and all other medicines out of reach of children.**
- Store TRUVADA at room temperature 77 °F (25 °C).
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- Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. If you throw any medicines away make sure that children will not find them.

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This leaflet summarizes the most important information about TRUVADA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about TRUVADA that is written for health professionals. For more information, you may also call 1-800-GILEAD-5 or access the TRUVADA website at www.TRUVADA.com.

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What are the ingredients of TRUVADA?

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March 2006

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GILEAD

Lewis lends his voice to Pride

Civil rights advocate urges gay movement to 'operate on all fronts'

'It doesn't matter whether we're straight or gay — we all live in this house together and we all must work and build together.' — U.S. Rep. **John Lewis** (D-Ga.) (Photo by Susan Walsh/AP)

By RYAN LEE
rlee@sovo.com

A living legend of the black Civil Rights movement, U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) has also been one of the most vocal public officials in support of gay equality. As Lewis prepares to speak at Atlanta Gay Pride on June 24, he talked with Southern Voice about HIV/AIDS in black gay men, enacting a "Gay Bill of Rights" and witnessing "an attempt to discriminate against one of the leaders of the [civil rights] movement because he was gay."

SoVo: Have you thought about what you will speak about at Pride?

U.S. Rep. John Lewis: I will just try to say to the group that as we celebrate Pride, we must do what we can to stand up for the dignity and the worth of all human beings. It doesn't matter if we are black, white, Hispanic, or Asian American, or Native American — we're one people, we're one family, we're one house.

It doesn't matter whether we're straight or gay — we all live in this house together and we all must work and build together. And when I speak of the house, I will be speaking about not just the American house, but the world house.

When did you first become aware of the concept of gay pride, or gay civil rights? Were there any particular instances that brought it to your attention?

As someone who came out of the Civil Rights movement, I've always taken a stand and felt that we shouldn't discriminate against people because of race, color, or religion, or whether they were disabled. And during the movement, back in 1963 when I was 23 years old and preparing for the March on Washington, I saw an attempt to discriminate against one of the leaders of the movement because he was gay — the late Bayard Rustin.

We did what we could — Martin Luther King Jr., who was head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference at the time, [and] James Foreman, who was head of CORE, the Congress for Racial Equality — to get around that, and eventually Bayard Rustin did emerge as the planner and the organizer of the March on Washington.

I've always tried to do what I could — as someone in my late teens and early 20s, and later when I became an elected official — to be sensitive to the status of all human beings in our society.

Was Bayard Rustin the first gay person you met, or did you know others before him?

I think Bayard Rustin was perhaps the first person I knew who was gay, but, you know, he was not open — he never said he was gay, but people assumed that he was gay.

But I have friends that are gay, and I never, ever — I just don't pay it any attention whether someone is gay or straight, whether someone is black or white or some other ethnic group. You become free and liberated from trying to look upon people [with labels].

When you think of Bayard Rustin, what are the first things to come to mind?

This was a man who was discriminated against, this was a man that people tried to put down, people tried to shun, tried to keep back and not let him fulfill his own desire and potential. He was very, very smart, very, very articulate, a great organizer — and he was not used to his full ability. He had the capacity to be an unbelievable leader, but there were people who tried to keep him in the background because they were afraid what some of the opposition to the movement would say, or how they would use it.

When it comes to the major issues like marriage, non-discrimination laws, hate crimes legislation or ending 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' what do you consider the most important issue facing gay Americans, or which is most practical to pursue?

I think they've got to operate on all fronts. I wish we could do it all — sort of a "Gay Bill of Rights" or something like that. We have to confront every single one of those issues, and not say one is more important than the others.

You have so many members in the gay community serving in the United States military — people who are prepared to put their bodies on the line, and at the same time we go down this road of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." That policy has got to be abolished, and let people freely serve.

I've taken a strong position that individuals get married, not groups. People should be left alone. If two people of the same sex fall in love and want to stay together and get married, that should be their business, and no government — whether it be federal or state — should interfere with that.

And I think it shouldn't be a big deal for us to end discrimination based on sexual orientation. There should be a federal law to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation in government, public jobs, in the private sector, in housing, education opportunities or employment opportunities — just like they did in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when it comes to race.

HIV/AIDS continues to impact black gay men more than any other group in this country — why is that not part of the mainstream political discussion, or something that political leadership is talking about?

We should, we should be doing much more. I think many people in political positions, and people who are in very visible positions shy away from the issue. But we need to put it high on the agenda, and help educate and sensitize people. We need to do it in the religious community, and I think you're going to see more and more people speaking out and getting the necessary resources to combat HIV/AIDS in the African-American community.

Pride speakers

SATURDAY, JUNE 23
Coca-Cola Stage

3:45 p.m.: **Tracee McDaniel** — Transgender activist, leader of Juxtaposed Center for Transformation

4:45 p.m.: **Billy Urich** — A regional director with InterPride, the International Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Coordinators

5:42 p.m.: **Aida Rentas** & **Rev. Bradley Schmeling** — Grand Marshals of Atlanta Pride 2007. Rentas is a longtime activist for gay and Latino rights who founded The Grass Roots Institute, a non-profit to help single parents when students have spring, summer and holiday breaks from school.

Schmeling is awaiting a decision about whether he will be removed from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America roster for being in a same-sex relationship.

Washington Mutual Stage

2:25 p.m.: **Joshua** & **Dexter** — Winners of the annual YouthPride essay contest

3:15 p.m.: **Fiona Zedde** — Local lesbian author of such books as "Bliss," "Every Dark Desire"

SUNDAY, JUNE 24
Coca-Cola stage

3 p.m.: **U.S. Rep. John Lewis** — Veteran civil rights activist and U.S. Congress member

4:13 p.m. **Laura Moye** — Local representative of Amnesty International

5:03 p.m. **R.J. Thompson** — Program coordinator for the U.S. Human Rights Network

5:58 p.m. **Susan Stanton** — Honorary Grand Marshal who was fired as city manager of Largo, Fla., after announcing she was transitioning from Steve to Susan

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Workin' it for the weekend

Pride brings plenty of spectacular nightlife events for men and women

By ROB BECK

LEFT: **DJ Peter Rauhofer** is part of a huge double bill during Pride. CENTER: Good girls go to Heaven for Pride. RIGHT: **DJ Tony Moran** digs Fruitcake Production's 'Passion.'

WITH THE POSSIBILITY ONCE AGAIN OF RAIN during Atlanta Pride, festival attendees may face another wet weekend.

But thanks to the huge selection of parties providing opportunities to sweat it out on the dance floor, the weather won't be the only thing that's hot and wet at Pride 2007.

Promoters and venues were quick to announce their lineups for this year's extravaganza and get a jump on the competition. First out of the gate was WETbar's Arman Reyes, whose "Spectacular Spectacular" roster of Pride talent reads like a Best Of list. Appearances all weekend include DJs Kio Kio, Phil B and Michael Fierman, as well as singers Deborah Cox, Kristine W and "Let the Music Play" songstress Shannon.

"We just wanted it to be the most fun lineup possible," Reyes says.

Reyes and general manager Krystee Manifold are counting on crowds to respond particularly well to the vocal talent, especially perennial gay favorite Deborah Cox, who takes the stage Friday night.

"Everyone has had his or her heart broken, and there's just something empowering and relatable to everything she puts out," Reyes says of Cox. "No one can put it in words or belt it out like Miss Deborah."

Available "Spectacular Spectacular" passes not only guarantee entrance to the club for the whole weekend, but also privileges like line-skip and goody bags.

PRIDE NIGHTLIFE STAYS HOT AS 2GETHA Productions' Jason Snead teams up with C2's Chris Coleman to bring two DJ superstars to the Fox Theatre on Friday night: Manny Lehman and Peter Rauhofer.

On what amounts to 2getha's first anniversary — the promoters' first ever event took place the weekend following Pride last year — it makes sense for Snead to pack the bill and book the Fabulous Fox.

"We have tried using the space before, but it had always been booked for weddings," Snead says of scoring the Fox for Pride.

Snead says the crowd, which he anticipates to be huge, benefits from the combined forces of not only Lehman and Rauhofer, but also of 2getha and C2.

"The quality of our events has always been high," he says, "but the turnout is going to be a lot better with us both teamed up together and with two powerhouse DJs. I think people will walk away not wanting to leave."

Also counting on giving the others a run for their money is Fruitcake Productions. They bring none other than DJ Tony Moran for the Friday installment of its late night party, Passion Pride at the Body Shop.

"Tony is indeed a superstar and a good friend," says Fruitcake's Fernando Jardim. "We are very happy to have him spinning his magic at one of our Passion events."

Jardim says Atlanta can expect more of what Moran does best: getting the crowd moving.

"We expect it to be a terrific set of genuine after-hours music with that spicy touch that only Tony can create and the Atlanta crowd absolutely loves best," he says.

In addition to Moran's set on Friday, Fruitcake has the entire weekend packed with their events, with DJ VanCronkhite and Brian Beck playing the Saturday and Sunday night Passion parties, respectively, and internationally known DJs Chus & Ceballo returning to reprise their 2-T-Fruity sets of Prides past.

"Our Pride 2-T-Fruity last year [with Chus & Ceballo] was legendary, and we are privileged to work with such talent again," Jardim says, also noting that the event will be the unveiling of the renovated Club Opera, formerly eleven50.

Also on tap Pride weekend, a Friday show at Hoedowns features Leslie Jordan, Charlie Brown, Lady Chablis, and Raven; Jungle hosts DJ Mark Tarbox on Saturday night and the Return of Studio 54 on Sunday night; and Traxx at Atlanta Live throws a special bash on Saturday night.

AND THANKS TO THE HEAVEN AND PEACH parties, the two biggest ladies' Pride nightlife events, the boys aren't the only ones gearing up to sweat it out on the dance floor.

Heaven kicks things off Friday night at the Park Tavern, boasting a predicted crowd of more than 1,000 women (and a few men). The festivities start with a special screening of "Curl Girls," Logo's new lesbian surfer reality show, and an art exhibit from Bethany Petri, Kathleen Plate and Efi Designs.

The party proper features a variety of atmospheres made possible by the sprawling venue, which Anna Ragghianti of Swa-Ra, the promotions company behind the event, praises as being key to Heaven's success.

"The floor-to-ceiling windows have a great view of the Atlanta skyline," she says, "and it's a multi-level venue, so there's plenty to see and do."

Swa-Ra plans to plant Atlanta DJs Vicki Powell and Kim Crawford upstairs to spin house and dance music, and DJ Duck downstairs with hip-hop, Latin and pop beats.

"The event has something for everyone," says Ragghianti, noting not only the variety of music, but also performances and sexy go-go dancers.

Also kicking it up for the ladies is the Peach party Saturday night at the Loft. Sponsored by Curve Magazine, Peach features grooves from DJ Pat Pat, sexy go-go dancers, and surprise celebrities.

Purchasing the $75 VIP Peach Party Pass gives priority access to both the Heaven and Peach parties, the VIP lounge and sponsor bar at Peach, and a gift bag.

For Pride weekend, My Sisters' Room hosts performers Kristy Lee and Steph Callahan on Friday night and the "Our Little Secret" party on Saturday night in the lesbian bar's new East Atlanta location. Paris Decatur also kicks it up a notch with special DJs all weekend, including DJ Donia, DJ Brian, and DJ Ernest Dulane.

Another Family Affair and Traxx Girls aim to get the girls grooving starting Friday with a Pride installment of Frisky Fridays at Club Miami, featuring a wet T-shirt competition and a surprise celebrity appearance. Their Saturday celebration starts out at Attraxxions downtown and then joins the boys at Traxx at Atlanta Live, while Sunday night sees a return to Club Miami, hosted by Ms. Sophia.

Ladies at Play also gets in on the action with a Sunday night Pride party from 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. at Plaka on Cheshire Bridge Road.

MORE INFO:
See complete Pride events calendar on Page 60.

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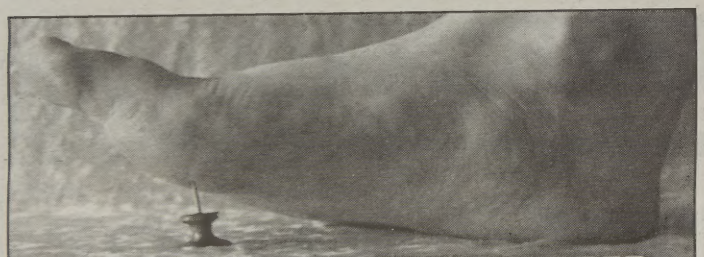

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Pride events: Friday

Gay couples exchange 'I do's'

More than 100 couples are expected to participate in this year's Atlanta Pride Commitment Ceremony. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

At a time when gay men and lesbians are still struggling to acquire the rights to marry, the annual mass commitment ceremony at this weekend's Gay Pride event might be the perfect venue to say vows — even if they aren't legal ones.

Friday night's non-denominational ceremony, held at Magnolia Hall in Piedmont Park, will draw a crowd of same-sex couples to exchange rings and "I do's."

At press time, approximately 45 couples had registered for the event. Kate Murphy of Atlanta Couples Together says there will be a lot more by the time the event begins Friday night at 7:30 p.m. "We always get a lot of walk ups for the event, so we won't really know an exact number until that time. We usually have around 75-125 couples who participate," she says.

More than participants attend. Murphy says the couples traditionally get great support at the ceremony from their friends and family.

What many people don't realize, according to Murphy, is that this kind of event is not a staple at Gay Prides across the country and world. "As far as I know, we are the only Pride that has this kind of ceremony," she says. "People come from all over the country to be able to do this."

In recent years, the event was held at the Sheraton Midtown Atlanta at Colony Square. Construction work at the Sheraton has pushed the ceremony back to Magnolia Hall this year.

Rev. Paul Graetz, senior pastor of First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta, will officiate the ceremony along with Rev. Renee DuBose, pastor of Our Hope Metropolitan Community Church in Athens. Graetz has been officiating for six years now.

Pride Commitment Ceremony
Friday, June 22
Registration at 7:30 p.m.,
ceremony begins at 8 p.m.
Magnolia Hall, Piedmont Park

"For me, it's great to look around and see all the love in the room. It's a wonderful feeling, with a lot of energy," he says.

Cake and commemorative certificates are available after the ceremony, as is a photographer to snap pictures.

—Jim Farmer

YouthPride Prom provides safe nightlife for gay young people

Fashion runs the gamut from fun to formal at the annual YouthPride Prom. (Photo by Bo Shell)

YouthPride is set to present its fourth annual YouthPride Prom in conjunction with Atlanta Pride on June 22 at the Pool House in Piedmont Park. DJ Cody Nation will provide music, with drag queen Nicole Paige Brooks set to perform.

Kyle Bailey, YouthPride's community relations director, says the Prom provides a necessary outlet for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth to interact safely away from the dangers of the adult party scene.

YouthPride Prom
Friday, June 22, 8 p.m. – 12 a.m.
The Pool House at Piedmont Park
www.youthpride.org

"Basically, [the purpose of YouthPride Prom] is to [provide LGBT youth] across Georgia with a safe environment in which to be themselves," he says. The alcohol- and drug-free event, he says, will be provided with security.

The prom, open to gay youth across Georgia ranging in age from 13 to 24, is the result of a joint effort between YouthPride and Jason Snead of 2getha Productions. Snead echoes the need for a safe space for gay youth, saying that his goal is to provide "club quality entertainment without all the problems around kids in clubs."

Also involved in planning the event is YouthPride's Youth Board, comprised of some of the gay youth served by the organization. According to Bailey, this is part of YouthPride's mission "to empower and provide leadership opportunities for gay youth."

Bailey says that the prom brings into focus one of the most important and needful groups among Georgia's gay and lesbian population.

"Pride should be about supporting our youth for the next generation," he says. "Our youth needs support more than anyone."

—Rob Beck

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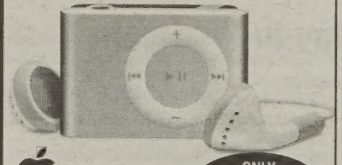

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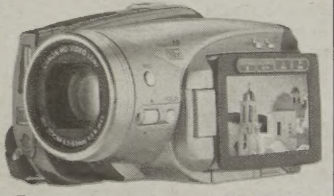

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Pride events: Saturday

Fun abounds at Pride kids' show

Pride's youngest attendees get a chance to tap their "Wiggly Biggly Toes" at a special kids' show slated for Saturday morning at the Magnolia Hall patio.

The 10 a.m. gathering features storytellers from the Decatur bookstore Little Shop of Stories and a performance by children's music duo Henslee & Kenslee.

Children's Show
Saturday, June 23
10 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.
Magnolia Hall Patio
www.littleshopofstories.com
www.hensleeandkenslee.com

Heidi Hensley & Holly Belle
Saturday, June 23, 4 p.m.
Coca-Cola Stage
www.heidihensley.com

Musical partners Heidi Hensley and Ken Henslee also perform for "grown-ups" in The Heidi Hensley Band, and Hensley takes to Pride's Coca-Cola main stage later on Saturday with Holly Belle.

But Hensley says her youngest fans hold a special place in her heart.

"The kids are the best thing about performing for kids," says the Athens-based musician. "I've played in so many clubs and bars trying to get an often drunk adult crowd to connect somehow to my music. And there are those moments when you really captivate a crowd. But never like children."

Henslee & Kenslee will perform songs from their CD, "Wiggly Biggly Toes," and other original tunes — but they don't want to be the only ones singing.

"Music is such an important part of any culture, and to see kids be so uninhibited to dance and sing and participate is so rewarding. We've tried to really set our show up to be very interactive," Hensley says.

Henslee & Kenslee are veteran Pride performers, and Hensley shares a special bond with her Saturday morning audience: She is currently pregnant, expecting her first child with her partner, Rachel, in November.

Henslee & Kenslee, the duo of **Heidi Hensley** and **Ken Henslee**, perform their cool kids' tunes Saturday at Magnolia Hall.

Her message?

"Our set doesn't touch on any issues, but I would love to tell all children that all families are special, and it is wonderful that there are differences in families," Hensley says.

"Our differences are what make us all special and unique."

— Laura Douglas-Brown

Lambda Car Club presents autos old and new

For the fourth year running, the Lambda Car Club's Dogwood region chapter will present its annual car show as part of the Atlanta Pride festivities on June 23. The show is just inside the 14th Street gate to Piedmont Park.

Lambda Car Show
June 23, 12:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.
14th Street Gate area of Piedmont Park
www.atlantapride.org

Monthly Cruise-Ins
Every third Sunday, 5 p.m.
Piccadilly Cafeteria
2226 N Druid Hills Road
www.lcc-dogwood.org

Steve Baughman, a member of the gay and lesbian car club, says that the show will present 25 cars owned by both members and non-members, ranging from the 1950s through current models. Owners will be present to field questions about each car.

"I try to have cars that are interesting," Baughman says of the selection, "but not necessarily exotic."

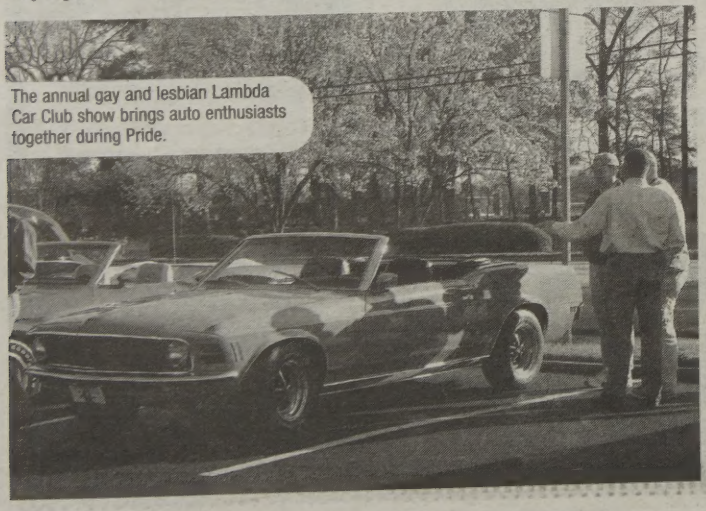
He also says viewers will see a variety of cars that may be different from what they expect a classic car to be.

"A lot of people think you've got to have a convertible and something really old," he says, "but that's not true. We try to have a variety."

Baughman, formerly the club's membership chairman, plans on exhibiting his turquoise green 1955 Mercury Montclaire as part of the show.

With over 200 members and active since 1989, the Dogwood Chapter of the Lambda Car Club is based in Atlanta and encompasses Georgia and its neighboring states.

In addition to its annual Pride Car Show, the club hosts monthly Cruise-Ins the third Sunday of each month at the Piccadilly Cafeteria on North Druid Hills Road.



The annual gay and lesbian Lambda Car Club show brings auto enthusiasts together during Pride.

The AIDS Quilt offers an opportunity for quiet reflection during the often hectic Pride festival.

AIDS Quilt on display in Piedmont Park

The AIDS Memorial Quilt is once again set to be part of the Atlanta Pride celebration, with a large-scale display of at least 50 blocks of the quilt in the Meadow at Piedmont Park on June 23.

AIDS Memorial Quilt
Saturday, 12:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.
The Meadow at Piedmont Park
www.aidsquilt.org
www.atlantapride.org

Though the quilt has long been part of Atlanta's annual Pride celebration, the NAMES Project's Jim Marks said that such a large portion was not always available for the festivities.

"Parts of it have been displayed just about every year at Pride," Marks said. "Since moving the quilt here six years ago, we were one of the groups that manned one of the beer tents at Pride, and we would always display a couple blocks."

According to Marks, it was not until fairly recently that the decision was made to bring a larger portion of the quilt, which was first started in San Francisco in 1987, to the festivities.

"About four years ago we said we should have a bigger display and began through that route with [Atlanta Pride's] Donna Narducci to set that up," Marks said.

The quilt, which consists of more than 46,000 hand-made panels memorializing people who have died from HIV, is displayed in collections of varying size at events and sites around the country. There are a number of permanent displays around Atlanta and portions available for viewing at the NAMES Project's Atlanta offices.

"People are always welcome to come to our offices and see it," Marks said, "and we can upon request pull specific panels and blocks if we know they're coming."

— Rob Beck

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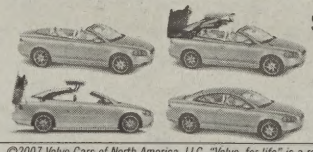

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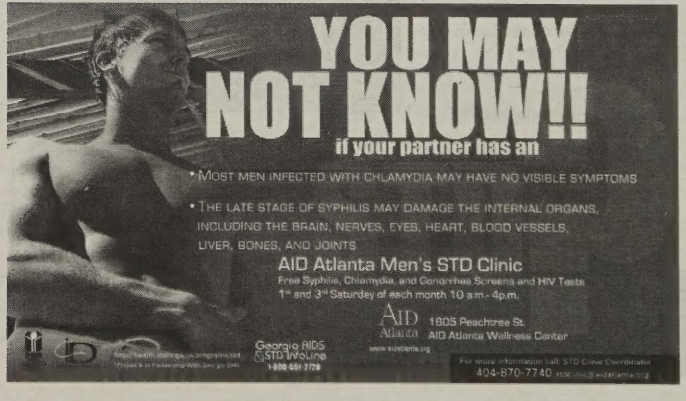
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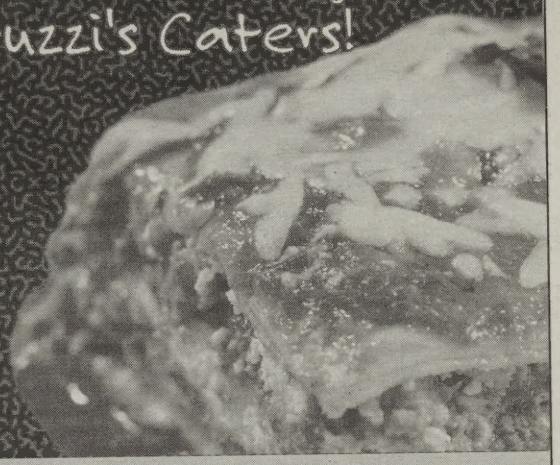

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Hundreds of women, many dressed in costume, participate in the annual Dyke March. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)

Pride events: Saturday

Dyke March chance to show unity

Last year's Dyke March attracted some 400 marchers through Midtown, and Atlanta Pride organizers hope for a large turnout again this year for the event.

"Some people may think it is the edgier side of Pride, but I don't think so," said Betty Couvertier, Atlanta Pride Committee Dyke March organizer.

"It is an opportunity for all the women, trans inclusive, to join in and express who they are, to show our unity regardless of our ethnicity, religion, color, socio-economic place or philosophy," she said. "And to show our strength and our willingness to be one."

The march will step off exactly at 6 p.m., Couvertier added. Last year, many marchers complained because they showed up a few minutes late to the march and were left behind. Couvertier said the permit from the city of Atlanta mandates the march start exactly at 6 p.m.

Typically, several women march topless during the Dyke March, but Couvertier warns that public nudity is against the law.

"To keep women from getting in trouble because of unlawful nudity, they need to keep their nipples covered with cloth, tape or something that completely covers and does not expose the nipple — paint is not considered properly covering the nipple," she said. "APC encourages all participants to abide by city ordinances and state laws to ensure a safe and fun event for all!"

The first Dyke March was organized by the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance in 1983 as a "Candlelight Lesbian Pride March" which went from Candler Park to Little Five Points. The first Dyke March to take place at Atlanta Pride occurred in 1984; the event has been held consistently since 1993.

The Atlanta Pride Committee made the Dyke March an official Pride event in 2005 and this year marks the 14th year the event has been held in an organized manner.

— Dyana Bagby

Dyke March
Saturday, 6 p.m. sharp
Charles Allen entrance
Piedmont Park

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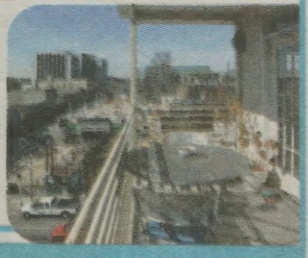

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Pride events: Sunday

Starlight Cabaret features 'a slice of Atlanta'

This year's Starlight Cabaret will end on a bittersweet note, marking the finale of a decade-long reign as host by Raven the "Goddess of Entertainment."

"I wish other people could stand in front of what has grown to be the largest drag audience in the South and feel absolute Pride," Raven says as she prepares to pass the torch of hosting the drag show that closes Pride each year, weather permitting. This year's Starlight Cabaret is scheduled to begin at 8:30 p.m. on Sunday on the Coca Cola stage.

Raven, the 'Goddess of Entertainment,' hosts the Starlight Cabaret for a final time on June 24.

The Starlight Cabaret used to be produced by Amber Richards, who schooled Raven on various business and performing elements of drag. Richards died in a house fire in 1996, and Raven pledged to host the Starlight Cabaret for 10 more years in honor of her drag mentor.

With a decade passing and Raven moving back to Oklahoma to be closer with family, the Goddess of Entertainment says it's time to hand the show back over to hometown drag queens.

"I am the finale of this year's show, and it being my 10-year step-down, my mom, grandma and other family are driving from Oklahoma to see it," she says.

While Raven plans on closing the show with a bang, Pride officials say the cabaret's opening number is going to wow the park audience like nothing before. And instead of individual drag acts, most of the show will feature all-out productions from some of Atlanta's top drag families and casts.

"People have really gone all out on this," says Jennifer Sheffield, director of programs for the Atlanta Pride Committee. "It is the largest number of people that I think we have ever had participating."

Starlight Cabaret
June 24, 8:30 p.m.
Coca Cola stage
Piedmont Park

Pride officials are keeping the exact line-up of performers a secret until the show, but Sheffield promises "it is a laundry list of folks."

"This is really a slice of Atlanta — we reached out to every major cast in Atlanta that we could," she says.

—Ryan Lee

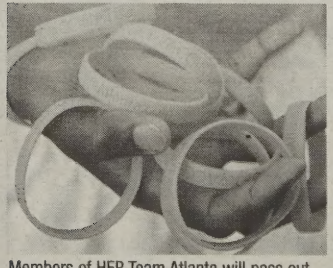
All weekend

HEP Team brings vaccinations back to Pride

HEP Team Atlanta vaccinations
June 23-24, 11 a.m-5 p.m.
Piedmont Park
Booths B2-B4
www.hepteamatlanta.com

For the second year in a row, Piedmont Park will be full of energetic young folks in bright orange T-shirts trying to remind gay men that staying healthy is an important part of Pride. HEP Team Atlanta — a partnership between AID Atlanta and the Fulton County Department of Health & Wellness — hopes to capitalize on the massive crowd by offering vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B on Saturday and Sunday.

"It's always our most successful event," national HEP Team coordinator Harold Levine says of Pride. "We vaccinated nearly 300 people at Gay Pride last year on Saturday, and would have done more if the festival hadn't been canceled due to weather."



Members of HEP Team Atlanta will pass out bracelets and offer vaccinations to raise awareness of Hepatitis A and B at Pride.

The HEP Team initiative is targeting gay and bisexual men in Atlanta, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, letting them know that they are more at risk for contracting Hepatitis A and B — also known as Vaccine-Preventable Hepatitis — than the general public.

Hepatitis A is transmitted through fecal matter in a number of ways, including oral-anal sex, or rimming, fingering or handling sex toys. It can also be transmitted by handling a condom that has been used during anal sex, meaning that practicing safe sex does not guarantee immunity from the disease, Levine says. Hepatitis B is spread much like HIV — through the transmission of blood and other bodily fluids, most often via sexual contact or sharing needles during drug use.

HEP Team Atlanta will also canvass gay bars throughout Pride and put up posters across town, Levine says. The vaccination is a multi-shot process over a period of months, but Levine says men who previously started a vaccination but did not finish it can resume the vaccination at Pride without starting over.

—Ryan Lee

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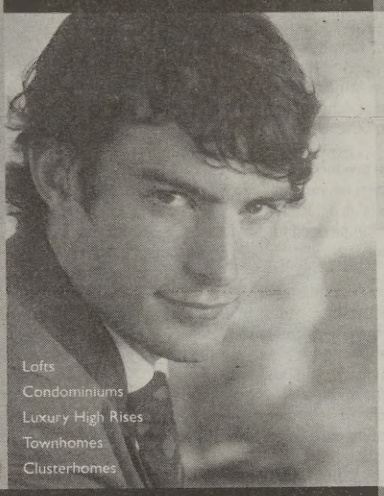

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SOUTHERN VOICE SPORTS

No rest for gay athletes this weekend

Pride-goers can choose from 5K run, golf and rugby tournaments

By MATT HENNIE

ATLANTA'S ACTIVE GAY SPORTS SCENE doesn't take the weekend off for Pride.

In fact, it gets started before festival-goers are even thinking about hitting the park on Saturday.

Joining two well-known annual events this year — the Front Runners Pride Run/Walk and the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus Best Ball Tournament — is the Southern Fried 7's Rugby Tournament. Run, putt or scrum, this Pride's got something for the sporty types.

The newcomer to the Pride sports schedule is the rugby tournament, organized by the Atlanta Bucks Rugby Football Club in an effort to raise the club's profile and gain experience in hosting a tournament. Southern Fried 7's is the club's first tournament and one they hope gives them experience and insight as they set their sights on bidding for an upcoming gay rugby world cup.

"We knew Pride weekend would be a perfect draw, a perfect time for teams to come to Atlanta and we want to get our feet wet with hosting a tournament," said David Reeves, the club's president. "This year our goal isn't to make a lot of money. It is to have fun and get the word out."

Eight teams — four men's and four women's — have already plunked down their $150 registration fee for the event, including entrants from North Carolina and Nashville. The matches will move more quickly than a typical one — halves are seven minutes instead of 40 and each team fields seven players instead of 15, so there's more room to run on the field.

"It's still rugby. You still have scrums and all of the fun stuff that makes it rugby," Reeves said.

The club's auxiliary, or non-playing, members will help fill out the ranks of the volunteers needed to run the tournament, Reeves added, but more are welcome.

"We could always use additional help from the community," he said.

MORE INFO:

Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus 4th Annual Best Ball Tournament
June 23, 8:30 a.m.
Alfred 'Tup' Holmes Golf Course
2300 Wilson Drive SW
Atlanta, GA 30311
www.afwcchorus.org

17th Annual Atlanta Front Runners Pride Run/Walk
June 23, 8 a.m.
Grant Park
www.frontrunnersatlanta.org

Southern Fried 7's Rugby Tournament
June 23, 9 a.m.
Sammye Coan Middle School
550 Hosea Williams Drive
Atlanta, GA 30317
www.southernfriedsevens.com

More than 500 people are expected to take part in the 17th Annual Atlanta Front Runner Pride Run/Walk, a 3.1-mile event in Grant Park that attracts adults and children alike.

Beyond the rugby matches, teams in the tournament were also invited to join the Bucks in the parade on Sunday to boost the sport's profile in front of such a large crowd. Club officials are considering making a bid for the 2010 Bingham Cup, the gay rugby world cup hosted by the International Gay Rugby Association & Board every other year.

"We would love for the community to come out and watch rugby this weekend," Reeves said.

JOG YOUR PRIDE Hundreds of runners and walkers will descend on Grant Park in south Atlanta for the Front Runners' annual event, ready to take on the hilly 3.1-mile course that winds through the historic park and neighborhood.

Between 500 and 600 participants are expected, up slightly from last year, according to Mike Spencer, the event's sponsorship director and a former Front Runners Atlanta president.

"We think we put on a pretty quality race," Spencer said. "It is a really positive thing. It's nice, clean fun. People bring their kids and dogs and everything else."

The event also serves as a fundraiser for YouthPride, an organization for gay youth, and the Living Room, an Atlanta nonprofit that assists homeless people with HIV/AIDS. The annual event has raised more than $140,000 for charities since its inception in 1990.

Sponsors help cover the fixed costs of staging the event, Spencer said, so more of the $20 registration fee benefits the charities.

"We just feel very good about those two beneficiaries and the work they do," he said.

Organizers also hope for a crew of about four-dozen volunteers to help with the race, including staffing water stations, mile markers, registration table and finish line.

New to the event this year is a costume division, inspired by a runner who wore a tutu during the event last year, Spencer said, adding that "he ran pretty well."

PUTT WITH PRIDE In Southwest Atlanta, women — and for the first time, a few men — will gather on a golf course for the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus 4th Annual Best Ball Tournament. Organizers hope to raise $2,000 and top the nearly $1,400 they tallied last year.

"We are not any threat to the LPGA or the PGA," said Eileen Stone, the event's chair and a past president of the chorus. "It's a great tournament and I would like to see more guys come out and play."

A full field for the event is 72 participants, though organizers expect to register about 50 players, which would be a few more than last year, Stone said. The $75 registration fee, plus a raffle and the ability to buy $5 mulligans, helps the event raise funds, which support operating expenses of the 30-member organization and a trip to Miami next year for the Gay & Lesbian Association of Choruses festival.

"The tournament is a lot of fun and there is an interesting spirit of competition," Stone said. "We've been lucky weather-wise and I'm keeping my fingers crossed."

Participants are paired in teams of four and hit the course by 8:30 a.m. to make it through 18 holes of golf as early as possible.

"We schedule it early because it gets so hot and we want people to have time to get to the park," Stone said.

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TUESDAY, JUNE 26

The AGLCC hosts a **Business Builder Lunch.** 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. at Rock Bottom Brewery Buckhead, 3242 Peachtree Road. www.atlanta-gaychamber.org

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27

Take advantage of free HIV testing opportunities on **National HIV Testing Day.** All day, see website for test site locator. www.hivtest.org

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27-SUNDAY, JULY 1

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THURSDAY JUNE 28 & FRIDAY, JUNE 29

Atlanta Cotillion continues its fundraising efforts with its 'Accoutrements' wine tasting and 'Welcome Back COTTA' improv comedy night. Wine tasting: Thursday, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. at Pergola, 976 Piedmont Ave. NE. Improv comedy: Friday, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Amsterdam, 502 Amsterdam Ave. www.atlantacotillion.com

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'Advancing our cause'

Rentas, Schmeling tapped as Pride grand marshals

By ZACK HUDSON and SHANNON JENKINS

Aida Rentas, a longtime Atlanta gay rights activist, said she is 'humbled' by being selected as a grand marshal this year.

ALONE, THEY EACH STOOD OUT, AND UP, FOR their own rights. Together, they represent the triumphs and struggles of gay men and lesbians in Atlanta and everywhere else. As spectators numbering in the tens of thousands cheer them on, Aida Rentas and Bradley Schmeling will lead thousands more marchers as grand marshals of the 2007 Atlanta Pride parade.

Each year, as the Atlanta Pride Committee begins nailing down the preliminary details of the annual three-day celebration, it calls on community members to nominate parade grand marshals. With exceptions for honorary representatives, Pride parade grand marshals must be openly gay or transgender Georgia residents. For the 2007 parade, the committee boiled down the nominations to one female and one male marshal pick.

"We gauge what these folks have done within the Atlanta and Georgia communities to advance our cause," explains Atlanta Pride Committee Executive Director Donna Narducci.

AIDA RENTAS

As the oldest of seven children growing up in New York City, Aida Rentas began her lifelong journey as an outspoken pioneer and advocate.

She was the first to learn English in her Spanish-speaking household and assumed the role of interpreter for her entire family.

"My mother came from Puerto Rico, and she didn't speak English. My father [a white Puerto Rican] didn't speak English," Rentas recalls. "So I had to defend my brothers and sisters and be the leader, even for my mother and father."

Later in life, as an out lesbian, Rentas stepped up to defend herself and her community.

"It was a crime to go to a gay club," Rentas, 68, says of her early adulthood in New York. "They used to put us in paddy wagons, and if you say who you are, it's hard to have jobs or be a citizen of the community. I thought, 'How unfair is this?'"

Watching her peers live double lives had a profound effect on the young Rentas.

"I'd never been afraid to say I'm bisexual, I'm lesbian, I'm whatever, and people would say, 'You say that like you're proud,'" she says. "I'd say, 'Am I supposed to be ashamed?'"

At 35, Rentas traveled to San Francisco and Denver and back to New York in search of a city with a vibrant community and good weather. In September 1992, she settled in Atlanta, where she immersed herself in social and political activism.

She founded the group Latinos En Acción and joined several others, including Fourth Tuesday, the Georgia Equality Project, the Gay & Lesbian Liaison Committee for Mayor Bill Campbell and the Civilian Review Board. Rentas then began training with the Victory Fund in an effort to run for public office.

Her preparation, however, was cut short in 1996 when a Mack truck struck her vehicle shortly after she had spoken at the Atlanta Pride Festival.

"My whole life turned around," says Rentas, whose left leg was broken in the accident. "I went from having all this money and this great job and a shop to being laid up for two-and-a-half years. It was a really hard time in my life, but it also taught me another end of the spectrum of really having to depend on community for everything. I couldn't move, and the community took care of me."

Although her political aspirations came to a halt, Rentas continued her service to the community. She was actively involved in the Gay & Lesbian Visitors Center for the 1996 Olympics and the "Olympics Out of Cobb County" protest. She also served for several years as the volunteer coordinator for The National Black Arts Festival and worked as the outreach coordinator for The Names Project.

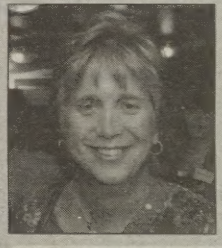
In December 2005, Rentas founded her latest venture — The Grass Roots Institute. This non-profit organization provides arts and cultural programming for children of single parents during school breaks.

"I did so many political things. After a while you get tired of the politics," says Rentas, who also serves as Mayor Shirley Franklin's volunteer coordinator. "What I realized is, at the

Please see **MARSHALS** on **Page 40**

Honorary grand marshal: Susan Stanton

Former Fla. city manager working for trans rights



Susan Stanton
Pride honorary marshal
Sunday, 5:58 p.m.
Coca-Cola Stage

Susan Stanton, who served as Largo, Fla., city manager for more than a decade as Steve Stanton before being fired for revealing a planned gender transition, is the honorary grand marshal at Atlanta Pride.

Stanton, 48, came out as Susan in May in Washington, D.C., as one of more than 120 transgender people and allies to lobby lawmakers for transgender rights.

Largo City commissioners voted 5-2 in February to fire Stanton after learning of her plans for gender transition. The commission reaffirmed the decision in March.

Stanton said Largo has a non-discrimination policy that covers sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, but that the legal staff said the city was not under an obligation to comply with its own policy if it chose not to. She decided not to sue the city and instead focuses her energy on education and fighting for transgender rights.

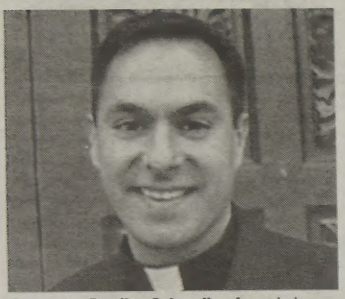
In a May interview, Stanton said she is still trying to feel her way through the transition process from male to female psychologically and physically. She has already begun hormone treatments and electrolysis and plans to undergo gender reassignment surgery next summer.

"I've known who I am since I've known I had five fingers," Stanton told Southern Voice. "It's been part of my conscious always. But did I understand it? Did I have the tools to confront my fears? No."

Stanton will be the final speaker at Pride, slated to take the Coca-Cola stage on Sunday at 5:58 p.m.

— Dyana Bagby

Pride marshals humbled by selection to lead parade



Gay pastor **Bradley Schmeling** faces being defrocked by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America because he is in a gay relationship.

MARSHALS, continued from **Page 39**

most vulnerable age — whether you're gay, straight, black or white — is when you're a child. My children learn to be open-minded. They learn all the things that you want people to know so that it can be a better world."

It was Rentas' dedication to making her community — and the world — a better place that won her the role of grand marshal in Atlanta's 2007 Pride Parade.

"It's a wonderful feeling that the community will give you that honor," Rentas says. "It's a humbling thing."

BRADLEY SCHMELING

Bradley Schmeling, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Atlanta, ignited controversy and frank discussion about gay clergy members within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Schmeling came under fire from the ELCA Southeastern Synod when he disclosed his relationship with partner Darin Easler, himself a former ELCA minister.

After Southeastern Synod Bishop Ronald Warren moved to have Schmeling dropped from the ELCA's clergy rolls, a clerical jury ruled earlier this year that current ELCA policy requiring openly gay clergy members to remain celibate is unfair. The jury stayed Schmeling's termination for six months, and encouraged the pastor to work toward changing the denomination's anti-gay relationship policy, thereby saving his job.

"By and large, it has been a gift to me to play an important role in moving the church towards greater inclusivity," Schmeling says of his role as a leader and activist on behalf of gay clergy.

Schmeling came out in 1992, and took the helm of St. John's as an openly gay pastor in 2000. He met Easler at a Minnesota convention of Lutherans Concerned, an activist and evangelical organization for gay Lutherans. After Easler moved to Atlanta to live with Schmeling, keeping their relationship quiet — even under threat of being kicked out of the ELCA — was never even pondered as an option.

"I don't ever expect to make that choice. If God is really calling me to the ministry, there will be doorways and pathways open to me. God would never ask for that," Schmeling says.

Schmeling's plight has made international headlines, and in the process, has drummed up healthy support for his ministry and his new cause.

At the ELCA Southeastern Synod Assembly in June, synod voters nominated and carried Schmeling to the top four of the ballot to replace the outgoing Bishop Warren, who filed charges against Schmeling with the ELCA after learning of his same-sex relationship. As a result of the controversy surrounding Schmeling, at least eight synods from throughout the U.S. have expressed official support of Schmeling's ministry and an ELCA policy change.

"Even with all of this going on and increasingly getting national interest in the church — day by day — we're doing regular ministry at St. John's, so I don't feel as though I'm caught up in this on a daily basis," the pastor says.

The controversy occasionally rears it head at home, Schmeling says, because Easler worries about the toll the struggle will take on Schmeling.

"I definitely think sometimes it's harder for him to watch what is happening to me than what it actually is," Schmeling says.

He can take it in stride, because, controversy aside, he expected his course as an openly gay pastor to be a bumpy one.

"I think when you're out in the church, you never know what's going to happen. I've known since I came out in the church in 1992 that my life would not be like a straight pastor's life," he says.

Regardless the outcome, Schmeling says his struggle will have in no way been in vain.

"In the end, I'm grateful for the opportunity to be able to tell my story, and to have my life and my relationship to help change the church," he says.

MORE INFO:
Aida Rentas &
Bradley Schmeling
Pride Grand Marshals
Saturday, 5:42 p.m.
Coca-Cola Stage

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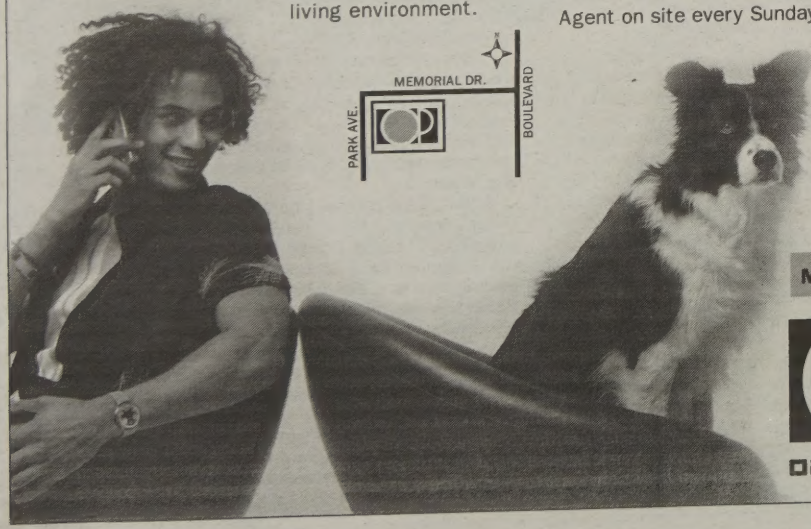

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Cycle sisters

Dykes on Bikes take pride in leading annual gay parade

LEFT: **Lori Buff** (center), founder of Dykes on Bikes 12 years ago, leads off the annual Atlanta Pride each year. RIGHT: Inspired by motorcyclists leading last year's Pride parade, **Mel Banks** came out to her family and plans to ride with the Dykes on Bikes on Sunday.

By DYANA BAGBY
dbagby@sovo.com

Last year, sitting in her red camp chair on the side of Peachtree Street under a slight drizzle waiting for the Atlanta Pride Parade to begin, Mel Banks, wearing a rainbow boa, was still in the closet to her family.

But when the Dykes on Bikes revved their engines and the roar of their motorcycles was matched by the roar of the crowd, Banks, 28, literally felt goose bumps rise on her arms. She shed a few tears and knew she could no longer be ashamed of who she is.

"They were balls to the walls, didn't give a damn," she remembers of the women, men, transgender and transsexual riders rolling their bikes into position to start the annual parade.

"They were all cranking up their cycles at the same time — they were just putting it out there. There was nothing wrong; they weren't ashamed. And I told myself, I want to do that next year," she says.

Making the decision to become a member of the Atlanta chapter of the Dykes on Bikes and ride for the first time in this year's parade meant she was also going to have to come out to her family.

"Within the next two weeks [after last year's parade] I explained to my family what I had known since the third grade," she says.

Banks, an accountant from Canton, Ga., who has been riding motorcycles since she was a little girl, says her family has been generally supportive since she came out. Her sister is expected to watch her ride her 2004 white and silver Suzuki Volusia in her first parade as part of the inspirational Dyke on Bikes on Sunday; Banks hopes her 18-year old cousin, who also came out last year, makes it to his first Pride.

"Watching those women on their bikes — it just really moved me. By participating this year, maybe someone else in the crowd who felt the same way I did will decide to come out," she says. "I'm just really excited. I can already hear the engines."

'ADRENALINE RUSH'

Atlanta's Dykes on Bikes is a loose chapter of motorcycle enthusiasts made up of a "ton of lesbians" but also gay and straight men as well as several trans members, says its founder, Lori Buff, 43, of Decatur.

"I started it 12 years ago with my partner at the time and wanted to be in the parade really because I wanted to show off my new bike, a 1986 Honda Magnum that I just bought and added chrome pieces to," she says.

Dykes on Bikes, part of the national motorcycle club where members lead off Pride parades nationwide, is one of several women motorcycle clubs in Atlanta, including the Chrome Plated Harts, Ebony Angels and Women on Wheels.

The first Dykes on Bikes participation in Atlanta in 1995 garnered 12 riders. Buff remembers the first parade vividly. There were placed in front of a vet's office with a truck painted to look like a Dalmatian and behind a group of marchers. The riders had to wait for the marchers to get far ahead and then speed to catch up. After that, the Pride Committee realized the bikers needed to be at the head of the parade. And there's nothing like leading the parade off, Buff says.

"We get the view of Peachtree Street wide open, waiting for us. It's such an adrenaline rush," she says.

Kat Kelly, 35, has been riding in the parade five years and loves being part of kicking off the parade.

"It's fun to get things riled up, all the bikes revving really gets the crowd pumped up," she says.

Last year, some 40 cyclists participated; Buff is hoping for close to 100 riders this year and says those watching will see a lot of chrome, shine and an undeniable sense of excitement when they start their motors.

"And a lot of noise," she adds with a laugh.

This year Buff will ride with her partner, Janet Carter, on her 1997 Kawasaki Vulcan Classic, wearing as much leather as the heat will allow.

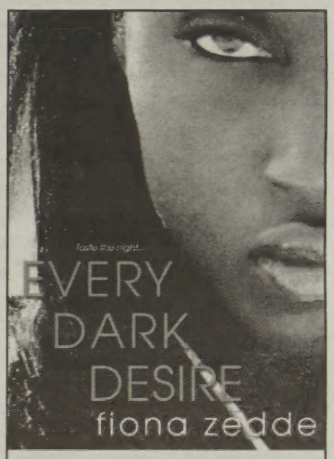
And there will be women along the route who will flash the Dykes on Bikes and Buff, who typically is in the lead, will stop to allow the group to enjoy the views.

"As we get closer to the park, people lose their minds," she says.

While Buff jokes about the cliché of lesbians on motorcycles, she believes Dykes on Bikes is more than that — it's about shedding society's conservative expectations of women and connecting to others like them.

"There's a certain amount of oppression on women and on the gay community all together, so it's nice, important to have something that gives us a sense of freedom," she says.

MORE INFO:
Atlanta Pride Parade
Step off 1 p.m.
Corner of Ralph McGill Boulevard and Peachtree Street
home.earthlink.net/~dykesonbikes/



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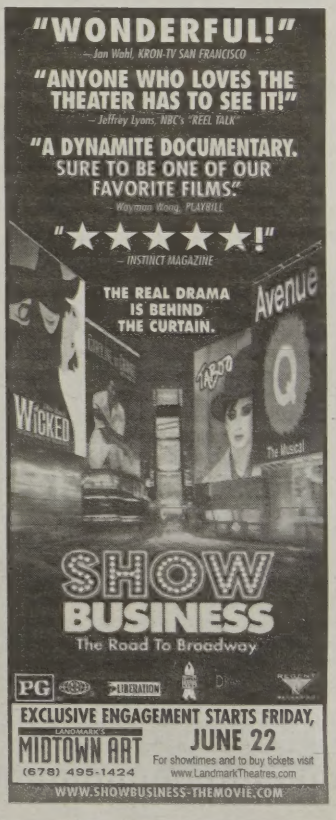
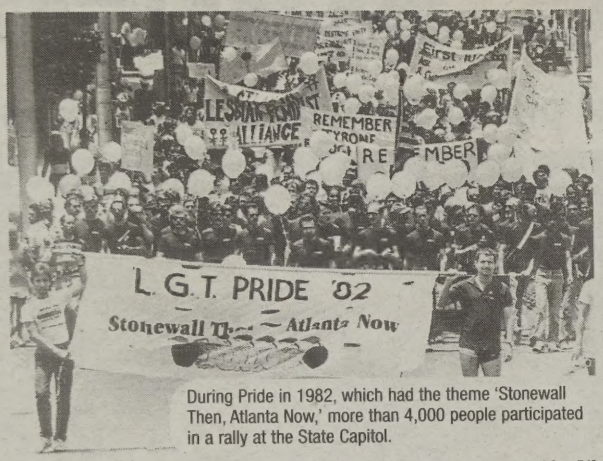


The evolution of Atlanta Pride

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

Thirty-eight years ago, on June 28, 1969, police who went to conduct a routine raid at a New York City gay bar called the Stonewall Inn got a major surprise: A ragtag bunch of drag queens, gay men and lesbians fought back against the police harassment in what became known as the Stonewall Riots.

The significance of the tumultuous three days that followed seemed immediately clear. By the next year, activists in several cities around the country, including Atlanta, held their own marches and rallies to observe the riot's anniversary. These marches became the first Gay Pride celebrations, and the riots that sparked them became known as the beginning of the modern gay rights movement.



During Pride in 1982, which had the theme 'Stonewall Then, Atlanta Now,' more than 4,000 people participated in a rally at the State Capitol.

37 YEARS OF ATLANTA PRIDE

1970

On the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, about 100 activists march down Peachtree Street. The march received no media coverage, and no known records remain, leading some to dispute whether it happened.

1971

Democratic party activist Bill Smith legally incorporates the revolutionary Gay Liberation Front, following the trend of GLF groups springing up around the country. GLF sponsors Atlanta's first official "Gay Liberation Day" ("lesbian" isn't specifically included yet) march down Peachtree Street to Piedmont Park. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution covers the march and estimates attendance at less than 50; GLF estimates 125.

1972

Over 300 march in the next Gay Pride, which is covered widely by local television. GLF again sponsors the event, but dissolves the next year. Charlie St. John is appointed by Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell to the city's Community Relations Commission. He is the city's first openly gay appointee. Pride is viewed by some gay businesses as too radical, and two large gay bars throw out activists distributing Pride fliers.

1973

Gay Pride continues to grow, although some marchers wear paper bags over their heads to demonstrate the dangers of coming out. Gays picket the Atlanta Journal-Constitution after Charlie St. John is fired from his job as a copy carrier for distributing Gay Pride fliers. The GBI searches St. John's apartment on drug charges many believe to be fabricated.

1974

The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, formed in 1972, fields the first openly lesbian softball team to play in the city league, and helps coordinate Lesbian & Gay Pride Day.

1975

Local gay media outlets founded in the year before now cover Pride, with attendance estimated at 600. The Barb bills itself as "the groovy newspaper covering Atlanta and the Southeast"; Cruise is a gay bar guide.

1976

Gay Pride celebrates the theme "Christopher St. South" with 1,000 marchers. Mayor Maynard Jackson issues a "Gay Pride Day" proclamation. Angry conservatives form Citizens for a Decent Atlanta, call for Jackson's resignation, and take out large newspaper ads claiming the proclamation encourages "acts against the moral laws of Judeo-Christian tradition."

The Gay Pride Planning Committee renames itself the Gay Rights Alliance, and although there was often tension between radical activists like GLF and more mainstream groups like gay churches around the first Pride marches, members of the new group include the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, Dykes for a Second American Revolution, the Metropolitan Community Church, Dignity (gay Catholics) and Integrity (gay Episcopalians).

1977

Stung by controversy from the year before, Mayor Jackson issues a "Human Rights Week" proclamation instead of "Gay Pride." About 1,500 attend Pride, in which the Gay Rights Alliance carries a banner calling for national gay rights legislation and an Atlanta gay rights ordinance (not passed until 1986). At Pride, Gil Robison announces the formation of a gay political group, First Tuesday. Suggested chants distributed at the march include "Anita Bryant go away: Gay rights are here to stay" — a reference to the controversial orange juice queen turned anti-gay spokesperson.

1978

Anita Bryant doesn't go away, and in fact comes to Atlanta to give the keynote address at the Southern Baptist Convention at the World Congress Center. A protest at Bryant's June 11 visit takes the place of the usual gay Pride celebration, and police estimate 2,000 march on the World Congress Center. Activists place attendance as high as 4,000, and money collected at the rally is used to start the Atlanta Gay Center, which later became the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center.

1979

Pride is put together by those helping organize the First National March on Washington for Lesbian & Gay Rights. Ten years after the Stonewall Riots, Pride's theme is "Lavender Anniversary." Events include the first gay film festival at the Metropolitan Community Church and an open mike at the Pride rally. Estimated attendance ranges from 700 to 1,000.

1980

A new decade brings a new name for Gay Pride, now dubbed "Lesbian Gay Transperson" Pride day—the "LGT" is sometimes also interpreted as "Let's Get Together." Over 1,200 attend. The Gay Atlanta Minorities Association sponsors a rap session on "Black Lesbian/Gay/Transperson survival in the '80s." Pride's theme is "International Gay Solidarity Day."

1981

LGT Pride attempts to advertise on MARTA. The fundraising and publicity committee reports that initial discussions are "positive," but MARTA officials later refuse to allow the words "lesbian, gay, transperson" and suggest "free-thinking, free-spirited persons" instead. LGT Pride events include a street festival on 7th Street and a march from Piedmont Park to City Hall; an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 attend. The Gay Atlanta Minorities Association boycotts Pride, citing racism. But survival soon takes on a whole new meaning: The Georgia Department of Human Resources begins tracking AIDS cases in the state, and three are reported.

1982

Pride's theme is "Stonewall Then, Atlanta Now," and 4,000 participate in a rally at the State Capitol; there is also a carnival on Peachtree Place. The Atlanta City Council issues a Lesbian Gay Transperson Pride proclamation without the signature of Mayor Andrew Young, who contends approval is not needed for "private sexual practices."

1983

Pride theme is "Out Front, Out Loud, Outstanding," and the first "Stop AIDS" banner appears in the march. Attendance appears to drop, estimated by police at 2,000. The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance hosts a candlelight Dyke March from Candler Park to Little Five Points; the event will be resurrected 10 years later. Headline in the June 26, 1983, issue of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "Gays becoming key factor in city politics."

1984

Lesbian/Gay Pride parade and rally takes place on July 3, with the theme "Once more, with feeling." This time, Mayor Andrew Young obliges with a "Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Day" proclamation. Speakers include Sonia Johnson, an ex-Mormon feminist and third party presidential candidate. Attendance estimated at 1,500.

1985

Mayor Andrew Young proclaims first Gay Pride Week in Atlanta; the first community memorial for those who have died of AIDS is held. Attendance remains steady.

1986

Pride theme is "Forward Together" as speakers gather on the steps of the state capitol; most of the organizers are also working on the Second National March on Washington, which takes place the next year. Coke reportedly offers two trailers for the rally, until the company finds out the subject; then Coke offers to donate ice cream, safely without the corporate logo. (Ten years later, in 1996, Coke will become a major corporate sponsor of Pride). The week's events include a statewide gay rights conference, picnic in the park, women's softball, and gay church and atheist events, but only about 2,000 participate on the actual Pride day.

Please see TIMELINE on Page 46

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TIMELINE, continued from Page 42

1987

Pride organizing is a last-minute effort, with only about 500 showing up for a rally on the steps of the state capitol. Speakers include Leigh VanderEls, a lesbian mother who lost custody of her son and, with her partner Christina Cash, founded Southern Voice.

1988

In the midst of the AIDS crisis, Pride theme is "A Celebration of Life." About 1,000 march from the Civic Center to Piedmont Park. The first Pride Prom, a gay dance, is held.

1989

On the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, Pride theme is "Stonewall: Reasons to Remember." Mayoral candidate Maynard Jackson campaigns for gay votes at Pride, although once elected, he doesn't appear the next year.

1990

Pride draws 5,000 to Piedmont Park, as a billboard reading "Gay America Loves You" is erected over Interstate 75/85 during the summer. Of the 14 invited speakers, only four are gay or lesbian — most are politicians seeking votes. In a reaction to the problem, Pride later enacts a policy prohibiting candidates from speaking from the Pride stage, but the policy creates its own controversies in later years.

The Dyke March became a regular part of Pride in 1993, building on the success of a similar march at the 1993 March on Washington for gay rights.

1991

Theme is "Be There, Be Aware, Be Counted," and Pride attendance makes its first giant leap, to an estimated 30,000. Grand marshals are Charlie St. John and Cheryl Summerville, who was fired from her job as a cook at Cracker Barrel for being gay. Fourth Tuesday hosts a lesbian and gay business event during the first weekend of Pride. The Atlanta Pride Committee officially incorporates as a non-profit with 501(c)3 status. Front Runners hosts the first Pride 5K Run/Walk.

1992

Pride takes another huge leap: An estimated 60,000 attend in Piedmont Park. Theme is "Take Pride: Celebrate Your Individuality." Controversy abounds: AIDS activists protest a comment by a Pride co-chair that they interpreted as AIDS-phobic, while supporters of Samantha Claar, a lesbian running for state legislature, launch a "Let Samantha Speak" movement to protest Pride's policy against political speeches.

1993

Pride is dedicated to the memory of Venus Landin, an African-American lesbian who dies as the victim of domestic violence. Theme of "It's Time to Tell America" builds on excitement of those who attended the 1993 March on Washington. Also building on a successful March on Washington event, Atlanta holds the "Dyke March" on Saturday night. Pride gains its first major, national corporate sponsor: Bud Light.

Overall Pride attendance grows to 100,000, but Pride organizers prove to have been too ambitious in purchasing t-shirts and other merchandise to sell to the crowds. Perhaps due in part to excessive rain over the weekend, Pride is left with thousands in unsold merchandise, a huge debt and eventually a lawsuit from an unpaid t-shirt manufacturer. A settlement is eventually reached, with the Pride Committee getting a year to pay back the tab.

1994

Pride's theme is "From Stonewall to Atlanta," with events scheduled two week-

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TIMELINE, continued from **Page 46**

ends early so that Atlantans can attend the Stonewall 25 and Gay Games in New York City. Attendance estimated at 150,000. Pride Committee brings in enough revenue to pay off 1993 debt and 1994 expenses. Pride schedule expands to include Friday night, for a total of three days of events in Piedmont Park.

1995

Atlanta Pride celebrates its 25th anniversary with the theme "From Silence to Celebration." Attendance estimated at 120,000. For this festival, the Atlanta Pride Committee hires its first paid employee, part-time executive administrator Hubert Alexander. AIDS Survival Project takes over responsibility for organizing the Pride AIDS Candlelight Vigil.

1996

Atlanta's own Indigo Girls headline the Pride stage in Piedmont Park, setting a new attendance record of 300,000 for the festival. In keeping with the 1996 Olympics, beginning later in the summer, Pride theme is "People of the World: Listen, Think, Act." For this festival, Pride hires its first full-time executive director, Donna Narducci.

1997

Pride celebrates theme of "Generations of Pride," but a more apt theme might be "Triumph Over Fear" — the bombing of the Otherside Lounge, a gay bar, in February has security tight and many participants on edge. Stage speakers repeatedly warn those attending to keep coolers, backpacks and other personal items with them and report any suspicious activity, but no incidents are reported. As people turn out perhaps to send a message to the bomber, organizers say attendance again hits 300,000.

1998

With the theme "Unity Through Diversity," Pride draws an estimated 220,000 to the park. But extreme heat throughout the weekend prompts some participants, and later organizers, to seriously consider moving the festival to the fall or changing the Sunday afternoon parade to a night parade. But organizers later decide to keep the festival where it is, on the anniversary of Stonewall; for the time being, the parade remains at noon.

1999

Theme is "Prideful Past, Powerful Future." The last Pride of the century — and the 30th anniversary of Stonewall — brings rain, with attendance estimated by organizers at an ambitious (and disputed) 200,000. Pride includes a greatly heightened focus on families and children, with a "Children's Kamp" and a series of workshops and child-related activities scheduled throughout the weekend. For this festival, Pride hires two part-time employees, a festival director and a finance director.

2000

With the B-52s as Sunday afternoon's headline band, the 30th annual Pride festival sets a new attendance record, with organizers claiming 400,000 attended the weekend events. A mixture of sweltering sun and cooling drizzle greet revelers at Pride's new location in Piedmont Park's meadow, and a dazzling rainbow arcs over the park Sunday night to send the event out in memorable gay style.

2001

The Pride parade is the largest in the event's history, with over 150 entries. Although the weekend's theme is "Educate, Celebrate, Participate," it could have been "Gay Political Power," as the weekend drew more candidates campaigning for gay votes than ever before. All three major contenders for Atlanta mayor — including Shirley Franklin, who won in November with strong gay support — stumped during the festival, along with at least a dozen City Council candidates.

2002

Pride celebrates the theme "The Power of Pride" and draws counter-protesters for the first time in recent memory. About a dozen members of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas — led by Rev. Fred Phelps, famous for his "God Hates Fags" website and picketing Matthew Shepard's funeral — turn out Sunday morning to jeer at the beginning of the Pride parade. In response, members of local MCC churches pray and take communion on the opposite street corner from the Phelps clan.

2003

This year's theme of "Freedom to Be," selected months before the festival, gains added significance when the U.S. Supreme Court overturns anti-gay sodomy laws in a landmark June 26 decision — the day before the Pride festival begins.

2004

With the ultimately successful amendment to ban gay marriage in the Georgia Constitution looming on the November ballot, Pride celebrates the theme of "Equality = Justice," and organizers predict a more "political" tone to the festivi-

Please see **TIMELINE** on **Page 50**

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Pride 2000 set attendance records with organizers claiming 400,000 joined in the festival, boosted by the headlining band, the B-52s. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

TIMELINE, continued from **Page 48**

ties. But heavy storms dampen more than just the politics of Pride: Friday night's Atlanta Symphony Orchestra concert and Sunday night's closing Starlight Cabaret are rained out, as are many other performers and activities throughout the weekend. Attendance estimated at only 100,000.

2005

Atlanta's own Indigo Girls return to the Pride stage for the first time since 1996, packing the park for their Friday night set. Organizers estimate 30,000 attended the Indigo Girls' show, Pride's largest Friday night crowd ever; they estimate total attendance throughout the weekend at 320,000.

2006

Atlanta Pride celebrates its 36th anniversary with the theme "Pride 365: Live. Love. Be." For the second time in three years, weather is the main story: Friday events are called off after a storm topples the main stage shortly after opening ceremonies; Saturday night's entertainment is cut short by rain; storms start during Sunday's parade, canceling the rest of the festival.

2007

This year's Pride festival is history in the making — what will your legacy be?

— Sources: Southern Voice archives and staff reports; Dave Hayward; Maria Helena Dolan; Atlanta Pride Committe

Attendees at the 2003 Pride festival celebrated a landmark victory for gay rights that couldn't have come at a more appropriate time. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Texas law against 'homosexual conduct' and other sodomy laws around the nation on June 26, 2003 — the day before the Pride festival began. (Photo by Sher Pruitt)

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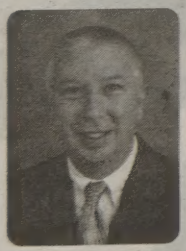

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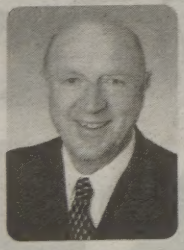

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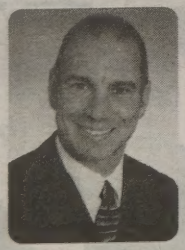

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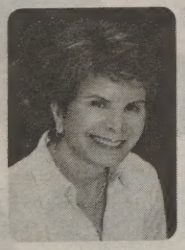

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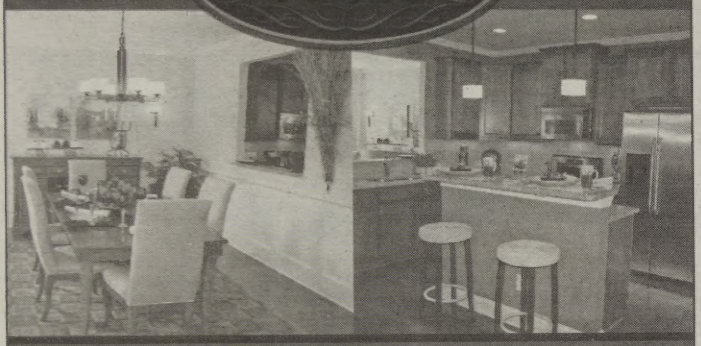

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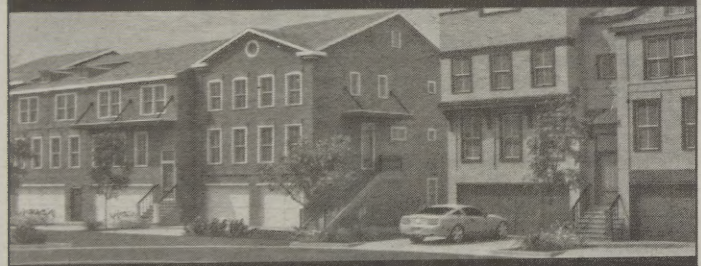

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First person: Pride 1971

'Gay and proud' marchers forged path for future Prides

By BERL BOYKIN

ON THE LAST SUNDAY OF JUNE 1971, THE Georgia Gay Liberation Front led the first official Gay Pride march in our state. I'm proud to have been one of the organizers for the event, and sad to be one of the far too few survivors.

Some 125 brave activists marched north on Peachtree to Piedmont Park for a rally, setting the pattern for each Pride to come. Along the way, we paraded past the Reverend Stanley's nest of Baptist bigotry on 5th Street, chanting, "Say it now/Say it loud/Here we are/Gay and proud."

The Baptists looked at us as if the Martians had landed; the crowds of hippies along the Peachtree Strip gawked in (mostly) friendly bemusement. We were relieved not to be attacked by the Klan or the police, which had been real fears.

We had been unable to get the city to issue at parade permit; the ACLU refused to help. As a result, we had to march on sidewalks, stopping for every light before street crossings. The AJC, so hostile to gay people they refused to even print the word "gay" until a year or two before, reported that "30 or 40" protesters marched in the next Monday's paper. Again, I say there were 125 in the parade. I know. As march marshal, I counted them — twice.

I'm happy to report that a few straight friends of freedom marched with us that day. I'd like to single one of them out for mention: State Sen. Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta), an ally of our community then as now.

THE GEORGIA GLF HAD FORMED IN THE FALL of '69 here in Atlanta in response to the Stonewall Rebellion and to the endless litany of heterosexist repression. We were mad as hell, and we weren't going to take it anymore!

When we gathered up the gumption for this march, it was not only in memory of the heroes of Stonewall, but in reaction against a gross new attack on our people. The Georgia General Assembly, acting at the behest of Gov. Jimmy Carter, had just passed a new law redefining sodomy so that for the first time in the history of our state, lesbian sex would be outlawed — with a 20-year prison sentence, no less! We had to fight back. And we did.

The first Pride March was great propaganda, great street theater, and, perhaps even more, it was an education in the potential of political action for those participating. And it was a great and liberating party for those who marched.

AS YOU ALL KNOW, IT'S A TOUGH WORLD FOR gay people, and it was tougher then. Far too many of those who marched that day have fallen along the way. AIDS, overdoses, murder; the causes are many, but much of the death toll happened solely because the victims were gay. We are all a bit more vulnerable because of being gay, given the general prejudices against us.

> 'As one of the few survivors of that first Pride in Atlanta, I ask that as you march, as you party, as you feel your pride this year, that you remember your dead, and that you carry the rainbow flag forward for them as well as for yourself.'
> — Berl Boykin

As one of the few survivors of that first Pride in Atlanta, I ask that as you march, as you party, as you feel your pride this year, that you remember your dead, and that you carry the rainbow flag forward for them as well as for yourself. If you want freedom, you have to be willing to fight for it.

One last note: People can change for the better. Jimmy Carter, author of that terrible anti-gay law in 1971, has come around to something like our side now. In 2005 he publicly came out in the pages of Southern Voice in favor of legalizing gay civil unions. It's a little bit of what we were marching for on that bright June day, now so long ago.

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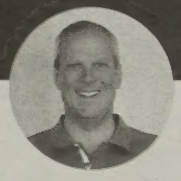

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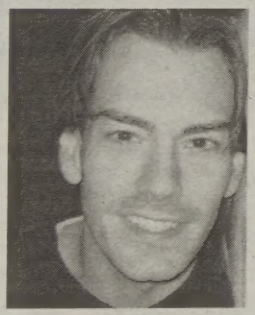

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First person: Pride 1972

Gay Lib Front a mix of Southern charm, radical politics

By DAVE HAYWARD

AS I HURRIED INTO THE UNDERGROUND print shop just off the Peachtree and 10th strip, I realized irrevocably I was not in Washington, D.C., anymore.

In the center of the room sat two arresting creatures back to back, one preternaturally poised and peroxided, and the other his Black Irish twin, billowing a mane of raven hair and the most manicured and elongated cuticles in captivity.

I'd encountered similar exotics in the Gay Liberation Front of Washington, but I was baffled by the co-existence of a gray three-piece suit in the same room, chairing the meeting and oozing instructions in tones of molasses and magnolia.

When I first met the belle in the suit, otherwise known as Bill Smith, in October 1971, I was subjected to a scolding on the "War of Naw-than Aggression." He was totally earnest, and I was amazed.

But after this inauspicious beginning, I was quickly assimilated into the Georgia Gay Liberation Front. Our consciousness-raising cell group was my key, where I would be indoctrinated into the evils of sexism, racism, capitalism, a smattering of Marxism, etc.

And, my God, we got religion. Each of the 10 - 12 men in the cell group could easily do a half-hour on sexism at the slightest provocation, to the thunderous silence of the rest of the gay community.

Sometimes they weren't so silent, either. I remember GLF members being thrown out of the Cove and the Sweet Gum Head, the gay bars in 1972. In one case management didn't cotton to our dispensing leaflets on the sexism of the bars and their quadruple-carding policies for women and blacks.

But in another, they gave us the heave-ho for placing posters and fliers about Gay Pride Day! None of the bar owners wanted any part of "that radical shit." The spectre of a queer demo in the streets was just too appalling for gay businessmen in 1972.

YET GAY PRIDE DAY IN 1972 WAS A BIG Event. About 300 lesbians and gays came out of the woodwork for the march down Peachtree, and the TV cameras made Bill Smith infamous for about 15 minutes.

In his frizzy white man's Afro and dark-rimmed glasses, he lead the chants in close-up: "What do we want?" "Gay Liberation!" "When do we want it?" "NOW!"

On the tube Bill looked hard and intense and, most of all, resolute. Atlanta certainly knew what the activist gay community wanted that weekend.

Meanwhile Bill was playing Russian Roulette with his accountant's job at City Hall. He later laughed about walking in Monday morning to an entire office staff staring straight ahead and breathing nary a word. But they never fired him; he covered himself well.

AFTER THE HIGH OF JUNE'S PRIDE DAY, the Georgia Gay Liberation Front began succumbing to dissension. One member, the Black Irish boy with the fabulous fingernails, called himself Severin (otherwise known as Paul Dolan) and led his own group within GLF: FLAME (Feminist League Against the Macho Empire).

The GLF led the 1972 Pride march, garnering about 300 participants. The group split a year later over tensions between integrationist and anarchist members. (Photo by Boyd Lewis)

A devotee of cosmic drag, Severin would perform in a Clark Gable moustache and a high-necked, black and white sequined evening gown. In a husky Lauren Bacall rasp he would do songs like "I'm Tired of Straight Men Fucking Over Me!" and thrill us with his panache and bravado.

It was inevitable that Bill Smith with his passion for incorporation and Severin with his for anarchy would collide. When the dust dispersed FLAME became a short-lived splinter group, and the GLF loped along through another Gay Pride Day in 1973 and then expired.

Bill with his bourgeois sensibilities and Severin with his transgender ones captured perfectly the schizophrenic zest of the early LGBT movement in Atlanta. But what I remember best is our crazy quilt family.

We believed in our non-sexist principles, we considered ourselves partners in struggle, and we lived together with a ferocity and an ardor I haven't seen since. It was an innocent strange interlude.

Editors' note: *This article was first published in the gay weekly 'The Atlanta Gazette' in June 1981. It has been edited from its original form.*

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2007 Pride theme highlights global struggle

By DYANA BAGBY
dbagby@sovo.com

This year's Atlanta Pride theme, "Our Rights, Your Rights, Human Rights," came about after Atlanta Pride Committee members attended an InterPride conference in Portland, Ore., and met Pride event planners from all over the world, said Jennifer Sheffield, director of programs for the APC.

While Atlanta Pride is welcomed by the mayor and city officials and brings some 300,000 people to the fun-filled event, there are Pride events around the world, such as Moscow and Jerusalem, that face severe discrimination and oftentimes violence when gay people try to gather.

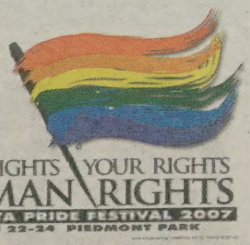
"There were some there who talked about how they can't get permits or adequate police protection," she said.

"All day we were in human rights workshops and it really put everything into perspective," Sheffield added. "And we wanted to take this Pride theme to another level."

"We want our patrons to understand the global struggle, and that's what this year's theme is all about — how can we take our rights to assemble for granted? We are all interconnected and whatever we are fighting for in Atlanta, it's for everyone," Sheffield said.

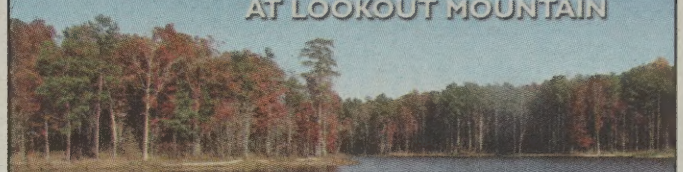
David Foote, advertising chairperson for the Savannah College of Art & Design in Atlanta, created the logo for this year's Pride. The rainbow flag with its bold brushstroke is designed to represent a worn, "battle tested" flag.

Sheffield said even the font Foote used for the text looked "constitutional" and fit well with the theme of freedom for all.



This year's Atlanta Pride logo is meant to make patrons aware of the global struggle for gay rights. (Logo courtesy Atlanta Pride)

HIDDEN LAKE
AT LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN



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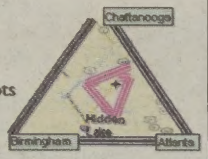

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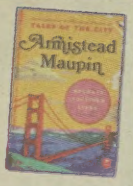

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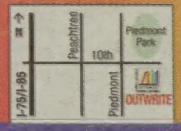

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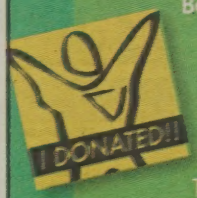

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Pride Event Calendar

FRIDAY JUNE 22

Pearl Day 18: Evolution
10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Six Flags Over Georgia
275 Riverside Parkway, Austell
www.pearlday.com

AGLCC & Atlanta Pride Committee Kick-Off Celebration
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Amsterdam
502 Amsterdam Ave.
www.atlantagaychamber.org
www.atlantapride.org

Pride Festival
6 p.m. – 11 p.m.
Piedmont Park
www.atlantapride.org

Hoedowns presents 'Sordid Lives' and 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil' w/Leslie Jordan, Lady Chablis and Charlie Brown
6 p.m.
The Coca Cola Stage @ Piedmont Park

The Washington Mutual Stage @ Piedmont Park
6:45 p.m. – The Jolee Project
7:30 p.m. - Jessi Lynn
8:20 p.m. - Eric Himan
9:10 p.m. - Butterfly Stitch
10:05 p.m. - Deb Hunseder

The Kirkwood Stroll
6-10 p.m.
Downtown Kirkwood, east Atlanta
www.kirkwoodbiz.com

Congregation Bet Haverim Pride Seder
6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Central Congregational United Church of Christ Fellowship Hall
2676 Clairmont Road NE
www.congregationbethaverim.org

Frontrunners Pride Run/Walk Pre-Race Pasta Dinner
7 p.m.
Einstein's
1077 Juniper St. NE
www.frontrunnersatlanta.org

ARGE, The Wigwood Years opening
7 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Vaknin Gallery
905 Juniper St.
www.urivaknin.com

Emory Gay & Lesbian Alumni Summer Social
7 p.m. – 10 p.m.
The Prince of Wales
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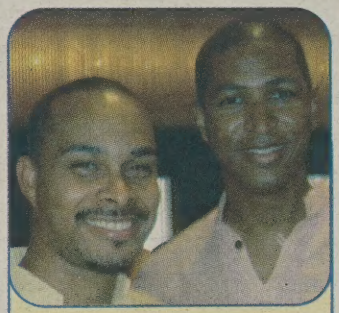

Atlanta Pride Commitment Ceremony
7:30 p.m.
Magnolia Hall @ Piedmont Park
www.atlantacouplestogether.org

YouthPride Prom
8 p.m.
The Pool House @ Piedmont Park
www.youthpride.org

Kristy Lee and Steph Callahan
8 p.m.
My Sisters' Room
1271 Glenwood Ave.
www.mysistersroom.com

Pride Country Dance and Code: Friday w/DJ Randy
8 p.m.
The Eagle
306 Ponce de Leon Ave.
404-873-2453
www.atlantaeagle.com

Heaven Girl Party
9 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Park Tavern
500 10th St.
www.myspace.com/atlantalesbianprideevent

DJ Kio Kio w/Deborah Cox
10 p.m.
WETbar
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404-745-9494
www.wetbaratlanta.com

Pride Frisky Fridays
10 p.m.
Club Miami
3011 Buford Highway
www.traxxgirls.com

DJ Vancrokhite and Trevino
10 p.m.
Amsterdam
502 Amsterdam Ave.
404-892-2227
www.amsterdam-atlanta.com

DJ Rick Walsh
10 p.m.
Heretic
2069 Cheshire Bridge Road
404-325-3061, www.hereticatlanta.com

Girls in the Night and Girlology 101 Membership Drive Party
10:30 p.m.
Le Bam
1540 Monroe Drive
www.myspace.com/girlologyonezeroone
www.myspace.com/girlsinthenight

Manny Lehman and Peter Rauhofer
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The Fabulous Fox
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Leslie Jordan, Charlie Brown, Lady Chablis, & Raven
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Passion Pride w/DJ Tony Moran
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SATURDAY JUNE 23

Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus Best Ball Golf Tournament
7:15 a.m.
Alfred Tupp Holmes Golf Course
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www.afwcchorus.org

Atlanta Pride Run
8 a.m. at Zoo Atlanta in Grant Park
www.frontrunnersatlanta.org

Southern Fried 7s Rugby Tournament
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Coan Middle School
1550 Hosea Williams Dr. NE
www.southernfriedsevens.com

Pride Festival Children's Show
10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Magnolia Hall Patio @ Piedmont Park
www.atlantapride.org

Pride Festival
11 a.m. – 11 p.m.
Piedmont Park
www.atlantapride.org

The Washington Mutual Stage @ Piedmont Park
12:30 p.m. - Morgan Rowe
1:15 p.m. - Athens Boys Choir
2:15 p.m. - Rock, Rhythm & Rhyme Café
3 p.m. - Youth Pride Essay Contest Winners' Speeches
5:30 p.m. - DJ Robbie Russell
6:15 p.m. - Blue Motion Squared Swimwear Fashion Show w/Carey Sherrell

The Coca Cola Stage @ Piedmont Park
3 p.m. - Mosadi Music
4 p.m. - Heidi Hensley w/ Holly Belle
5 p.m. - Jason & deMarco
6 p.m. - 13 Stories
6:55 p.m. - After August
8:15 p.m. - Three5Human
9:35 p.m. - Antigone Rising

SATURDAY JUNE 23
DJ Phil B. w/ Kristine W. and Debby Holiday
10 p.m. at WETbar
960 Spring St.
404-745-9494
www.wetbaratlanta.com

OVAH! Pool Party w/Leslie Jordan
12 p.m. – 6 p.m.
TWELVE Atlantic Station
361 17th St.
www.ovahproductions.com

AIDS Memorial Quilt Display
12:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.
The Meadow @ Piedmont Park
www.aidsquilt.org
www.atlantapride.org

Lambda Car Show
12:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.
14th Street Gate Area @ Piedmont Park
www.lcc-dogwood.org
www.atlantapride.org

Southern Fried 7s Third Half Pool Party
4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
The Spire Pool
860 Peachtree St. NW
www.southernfriedsevens.com

Dyke March
6 p.m.
Charles Allen entrance to Piedmont Park
www.atlantapride.org

Free Cookout with Atlanta S/M Solidarity
6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
The Eagle
306 Ponce de Leon Ave.
404-873-2453
www.atlantaeagle.com

The PRIDE in ART Show
7 p.m. – 11 p.m.
Fine Line Gallery
465 Boulevard SE, Suites 202/203/204
404-624-3900

MSR's Little Secret
8 p.m.
My Sisters' Room
1271 Glenwood Ave.
www.mysistersroom.com

'Walk Like a Man'
8 p.m.
Actor's Express @ the King Plow Arts Center
887 W Marietta St. NW #J107
www.walklikeaman.net

Michelle Malone and the Low Down Georgia Revue
9 p.m. at Eddie's Attic
515-B McDonough St., Decatur
404-377-4976
www.eddiesattic.com

Peach Girl Party
10 p.m. – 3 a.m. at The Loft/Vinyl
1374 West Peachtree St.
www.pandoraultra.com
www.curvemag.com

DJ Coqui
10 p.m. at Amsterdam
502 Amsterdam Ave.
404-892-2227, www.amsterdam-atlanta.com

DJ Brett Long
10 p.m. at The Eagle
306 Ponce de Leon Ave.
404-873-2453, www.atlantaeagle.com

Traxx Girls Pride Party
10 p.m. at Attraxxions
393 Marietta St.; www.traxxgirls.com

DJ Brian Beck
10 p.m. at Heretic
2069 Cheshire Bridge Road
404-325-3061, www.hereticatlanta.com

Traxx Atlanta
10 p.m. – 6 a.m.
Atlanta Live, 6559 Clairmont Road
www.traxxatlanta.com

Passion Pride w/DJ VanCronkhite
3 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
The Body Shop
2675 Johnson Road NE
404-636-1233
www.fruitcakeproductions.com

SUNDAY JUNE 24

Pride Festival
11 a.m. – 11 p.m.
Piedmont Park
www.atlantapride.org

Atlanta Pride Parade
1 p.m.
Steps off from Civic Center MARTA Station

The Washington Mutual Stage @ Piedmont Park
3 p.m. - Social Insecurity
3:45 p.m. - Tiffany Washington
4:30 p.m. - DaLyrical
5:15 p.m. - YouthPride Entertainment Block featuring Bria
www.atlantapride.org

The Coca Cola Stage @ Piedmont Park
3 p.m. - Congressman John Lewis
3:30 p.m. - Stoni Taylor
4:25 p.m. - Ira Levi
5:15 p.m. - Levi Kreis
6:10 p.m. - Deborah Gibson
7:10 p.m. - Michel Jons Band
8:30 p.m. - Starlight Cabaret

Outwrite's Street Party w/ DJ Richard Jones and DJ Chris Griswold
11 a.m.
991 Piedmont Ave.
404-607-0082
www.outwritebooks.com

Equality Pride T-Dance
1 p.m. – 5 p.m. at Sweet Lowdown
942 Peachtree St.
404-207-1324
www.thesweetlowdown.com

SATURDAY JUNE 23
DJ Mark Tarbox
11 p.m. at Jungle
2115 Faulkner Road
404-844-8800

Free Cookout
2 p.m. at Blake's
227 10th St. NE
404-892-5786
www.blakesontheparkatlanta.com

Pride T-Dance w/ Coqui
4 p.m. – 10 p.m. at Amsterdam
502 Amsterdam Ave.
404-892-2227
www.amsterdam-atlanta.com

Pride 2-T-Fruity w/Chus & Ceballos
6 p.m. – 3 a.m. at Club Opera
1150-B Peachtree St.
www.fruitcakeproductions.com

The Armorettes
9 p.m. at Burkhart's
1492-F Piedmont Ave.
404-872-4403, www.burkharts.com

The Return of Studio 54
9 p.m. at Jungle
2115 Faulkner Road
404-844-8800

DJ Michael Fierman w/Shannon
10 p.m. at WETbar
960 Spring St.
404-745-9494, www.wetbaratlanta.com

My Girl Gotta GirlFriend
10 p.m. at Club Miami
3011 Buford Highway, www.traxxgirls.com

DJ Pat Scott
12 a.m. at The Eagle
306 Ponce de Leon Ave.
404-873-2453, www.atlantaeagle.com

DJ Rick Walsh
12 a.m. at Heretic
2069 Cheshire Bridge Road
404-325-3061, www.hereticatlanta.com

Passion Pride w/Brian Beck
3 a.m. – 10 :30 a.m.
The Body Shop, 2675 Johnson Road NE
404-636-1233
www.fruitcakeproductions.com

Get close to the stars at Pride with SoVo & David

Join celebrities, staff for the Pride parade

Making memories during Pride hasn't exactly been hard before, but now, thanks to Southern Voice and David magazine, the task should be even easier.

A bevy of gay entertainers and artists go "Backstage with Southern Voice" at the Atlanta Pride festival. As a thank-you to readers, the newspaper and David Atlanta magazine will host prize giveaways and meet-and-greet events where special guests will sign autographs, pose for photos and sit for interviews.

A trip to the Southern Voice and David booths at Pride offers readers a chance to meet actors Danny Pintauro, Colton Ford and Peter Stickles, as well as Atlanta celebrities scheduled to appear.

Pintauro rose to fame during the 1980s as a star of "Cujo" and "Who's the Boss." As a student at Stanford University in 1996, Pintauro stared down an attempt by a tabloid magazine to force him out of the public closet. Unashamed of being gay, and already out to his family and friends, Pintauro sat down for an interview with the publication, and turned around what he said could have been a negative experience.

"It actually turned out to be a good, heartwarming story," says Pintauro, who comes to Atlanta Pride as a special guest of SoVo and David. "I think I got the point across that I was okay with who I was at the time, just as I am today."

Colton Ford is known to at least a few gay fans because of his short-lived but prolific stint as a performer in gay adult movies. The actor stars with Stickles in "The Lair," a new show from the On-Demand cable network Here!TV, which offers programming for gay men and lesbians.

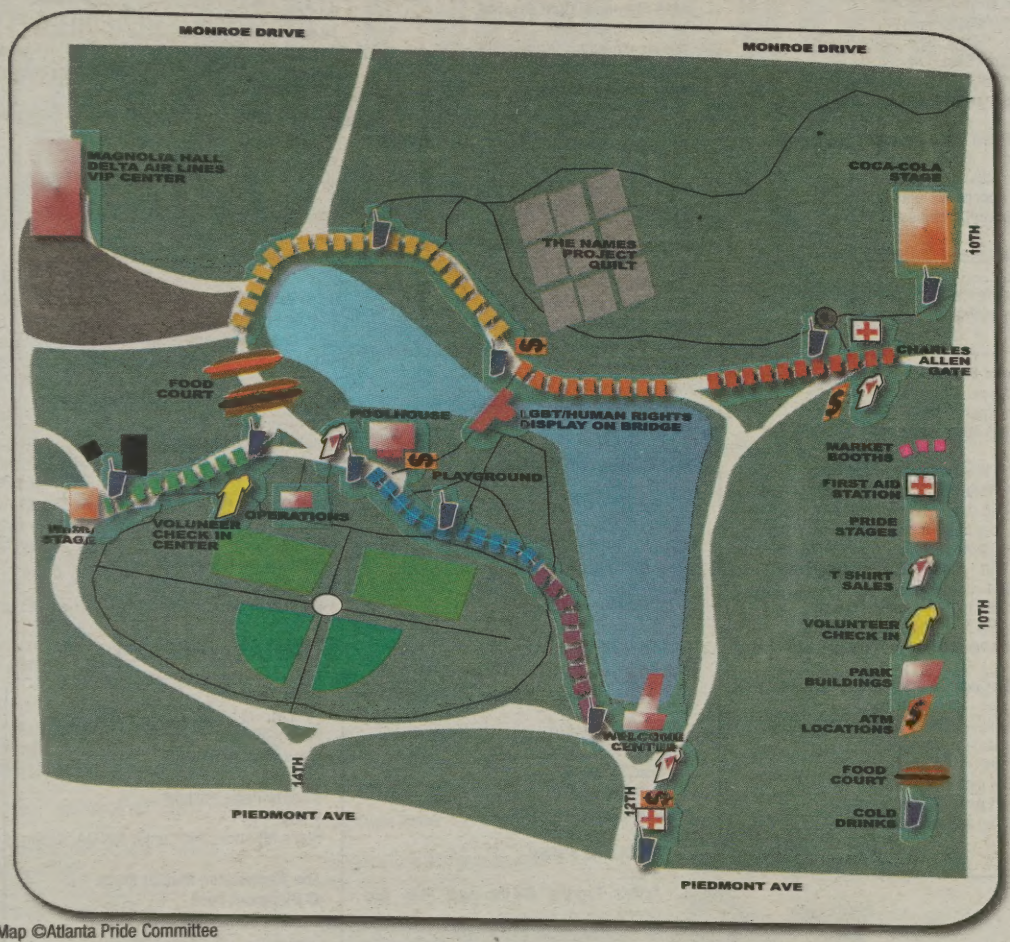
Stickles portrays a gay vampire in "The Lair," an erotically charged serial which features plenty of cliffhanger intrigue and skin.

Fiona Zedde, a prolific and popular author of lesbian erotica, will read and sign her books Sunday afternoon. Organizers and performers from MondoHomo, the massive queer indie arts event headed to Atlanta next week (see story, page 81), will be on hand Friday and Saturday.

MARCH WITH US Pintauro, Stickles and Ford will also join SoVo and David during Sunday's Pride parade, when fans, activists and community members are encouraged to come out and join the march.

The Southern Voice and David floats are positioned at the beginning of the parade, so volunteer marchers can enjoy watching most of the parade once the floats reach the Piedmont Park end point.

Each volunteer marcher who shows up will receive a free Southern Voice or David T-shirt.



Map ©Atlanta Pride Committee

Backstage with SoVo & David
June 22-24, Piedmont Park
www.sovo.com
www.myspace.com/southern_voice

Friday, 6-8 p.m.
MondoHomo
Danny Pintauro
Colton Ford
Peter Stickles

Saturday
12:30 p.m. - Colton Ford and Peter Stickles
1 p.m. - Meet the Press
SoVo Editor Laura Douglas-Brown
David Editor Mike Fleming
SoVo and David Publisher Bob Gunby
2 p.m. - Danny Pintauro
4 p.m. - MondoHomo
5 p.m. - Colton Ford and Peter Stickles
6 p.m. - Danny Pintauro

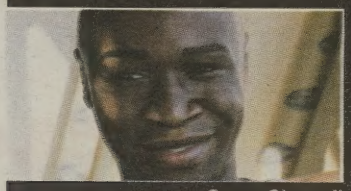
Sunday
3 p.m. - Colton Ford and Peter Stickles
4 p.m. - Danny Pintauro
5 p.m. - Fiona Zedde

Pride Parade
To march with SoVo and David in the Pride Parade, contact Zack Hudson at zhudson@sovo.com. Marchers get free T-shirts.

Author **Fiona Zedde** and actor **Danny Pintauro**, who starred in 'Cujo' and 'Who's the Boss,' are among the guests who will meet fans at SoVo's tent at the Atlanta Pride festival.

Jason & deMarco

Three5Human


Carey Sherrell

Ira Levi

Deborah Gibson

Levi Kreis

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FRIDAY JUNE 22

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BUTTERFLY STITCH
DEB HUNSEDER
COMMITMENT CEREMONY
PRIDE PROM

SATURDAY JUNE 23

DYKE MARCH
JASON & DEMARCO
Three5Human
ANTIGONE RISING
ROCKM, RHYTHM, & RHYME CAFE
CAREY SHERRELL

SUNDAY JUNE 24

PRIDE PARADE
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DEBORAH GIBSON
LEVI KREIS
THE STARLIGHT CABARET
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Take it or leave it?

Pride survival guide gives tips for all aspects of your stay in the park

By ZACK HUDSON
zhudson@sovo.com

IT'S HERE, IT'S QUEER, AND IT'S AS BIG AS ever. The story on Pride weekend doesn't change much. It's three days, 300,000 people, and a show-stopping parade.

The scads of people, events and sheer volume of activity can be a little overwhelming for some people, but with a few tips to set you on your way, Pride can be for everyone, especially those few festival-shy gay men and lesbians.

Pride organizers and vendors spend months prepping for the festival so that Pride visitors can have a great time, and SoVo offers this list of necessities to help make 2007 Pride the best yet.

TAKE IT: MARTA PASS

Most of the streets surrounding Piedmont Park will be crowded or closed during some or all of Pride weekend, sometimes leaving traffic and parking in a frenzy. Take MARTA to the Midtown rail station (41 10th St), then walk down 10th Street down to Piedmont Park.

Midtown traffic can come to a standstill leading up to and through the Sunday Pride parade. Meet your float group by taking MARTA to the Civic Center rail station (435 W. Peachtree St) to line up for the parade. Pride volunteers will be there to direct you to your team's staging area.

CASH OR ATM CARDS

Entry to the Pride festival is free, but almost everything else is not. Keep plenty of small bills on hand for food, drinks and souvenirs from vendors. Also, keep larger bills on hand to fill up donation buckets. Commercial ATMs are available in and near the park.

WEATHER PROTECTION

Mother Nature tends to be legendarily tricky during Atlanta Pride. Be prepared for anything.

The weather is likely to be hot no matter what, so choose loose clothing that can stand up to sweat. Sunscreen will save your skin, and don't forget sunglasses.

Umbrellas and rain coats aren't necessarily a bad idea either. Pride's been known to have the odd rain shower or twelve in years past. Also, slip a plastic, waterproof baggie in your pocket to protect your cell phone and other valuables in a sudden storm.

SENSIBLE SHOES

The Pride festival spreads over all 129 acres of Piedmont Park. Covering every square inch of the festival will be a difficult task with cramped toes and feet.

LUGGAGE

Don't think fanny pack, but do think about bringing something to carry the thousands of free promotional items vendors will be throwing your way.

Some bulky stuff will come with its own bag, but there's lots of key chains, bottle openers, condoms, pens, Pez dispensers — you name it — and you'll need something to hold it all.

GOODWILL AND GOOD SENSE

Pride is as close to gay Christmas as anything, so nobody needs any attitude. A lot of people work very hard to make Pride great. Don't insult them. Keep your smiling mug on display for all the hot boys and girls to check you out.

All the laws that are already on the books will still be on the books during Pride. Keep your head about you. Drink responsibly. Drugs are illegal. So are public nudity and sex. Don't give the street preachers more fuel for their anti-gay fires.

LEAVE IT: THE POOCH

Animals who don't normally reside in Piedmont Park are not allowed in the park during major festivals.

Repeat: Dogs are not allowed at Pride. They leave behind messes, get in the way in large crowds, and they will be more comfortable at home anyway.

STAKES

You're free to bring a tent for shade during the festival, but you can't stake it into the ground, and you can't spend the night in it. Piedmont Park rules prohibit overnight camping and turf destruction all year round.

BOOZE

Drinking in Piedmont Park is fine, but carrying an open container of alcohol into or out of the park is illegal. Pride vendors will have plenty of beer and other drinks on sale for responsible consumers who are of legal drinking age.

GLASS

Glass bottles, drinking glasses and jars in the park are prohibited.

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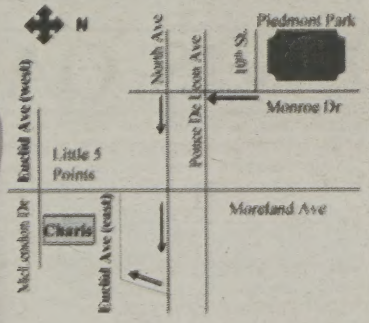

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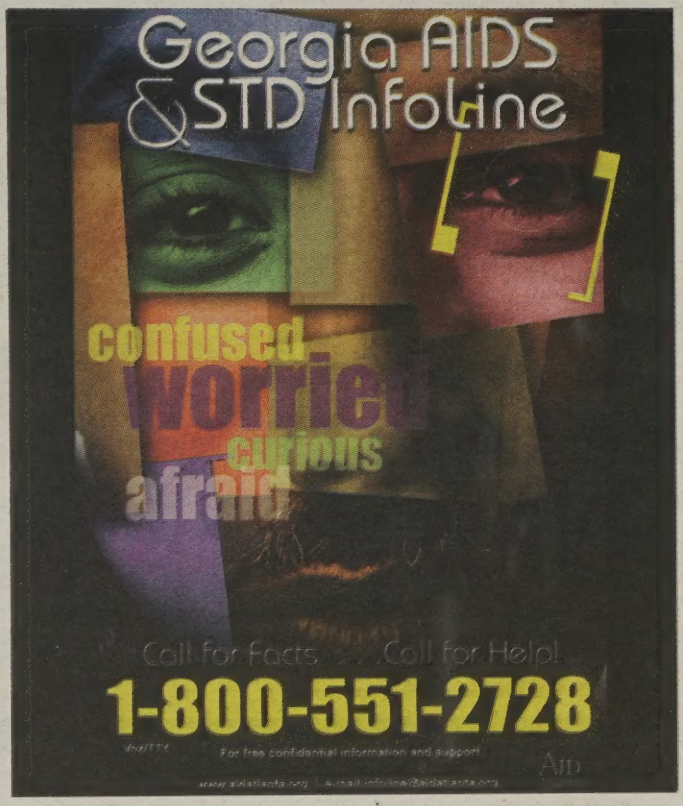

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Around the globe, Gay Pride means parties, protests

Sao Paulo hosts world's largest Gay Pride parade

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP) — Millions of people packed the streets of Sao Paulo for what organizers said was the world's largest Gay Pride parade, dancing and waving rainbow flags in a carnival-like atmosphere to condemn homophobia, racism and sexism.

At least 3 million people filled the canyon-like Paulista Avenue on Sunday, June 10, organizers said, surpassing last year's count of 2.5 million. The larger count was confirmed by a police spokesperson who is not authorized to be quoted by name under department rules.

"This is the biggest parade on the planet," Tourism Minister Marta Suplicy said. "Our city is showing, once again, its respect for diversity."

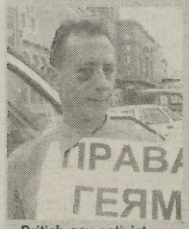
In comparison, recent Gay Pride parades in New York and San Francisco have drawn tens of thousands of people, and World Gay Pride Day celebrations in Berlin in 2004 attracted between 200,000 and 500,000 participants.

Parade organizer Nelson Matias Pereira said this year's participants are appealing for a "world where racism, sexism and homophobia, in all their forms, no longer exist."

An estimated 3 million people turned out June 10 for the world's largest Gay Pride parade in Sao Paulo. (Photo by AP)

Mayor blamed for anti-gay attacks at Moscow Pride

Three gay rights activists, including a European who was badly beaten by Russian nationalists despite the presence of riot police, were among the 31 people arrested at a Moscow Gay Pride demonstration May 27.



British gay activist **Peter Tatchell** nurses a black eye after being beaten up at Moscow Pride. (Photo courtesy of Peter Tatchell)

English gay activist Peter Tatchell, a Green Party candidate for the British Parliament, gave the Moscow Gay Pride keynote address at a conference the day before and took part in the protest. In a written account of his attack, Tatchell said he was punched in the eye while talking to a journalist, pushed to the ground and kicked by a man in a camouflage shirt while television crews documented the assault. Then police arrested him.

"I believe some of the violent right-wing extremists may have been plainclothes police officers who were doing in civilian clothes what they could not be seen doing in police uniform — punching and kicking the marchers," he said.

According to wire reports, a delegation of gay activists gathered in central Moscow to deliver a petition, signed by 40 European members of Parliament, to Mayor Yuri Luzhkov to lift the ban on Gay Pride parades. This was the second year that gay activists have gathered to ask Luzhkov to lift the ban and were met with violence.

Homosexuality was decriminalized in Russia 14 years ago, but homophobic attitudes are still prevalent among Russian nationalists, skinheads and ultra-conservative members of the Russian Orthodox Church.

ISRAEL

Police approve Pride event despite criticism from ultra-Orthodox Jews

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's police on June 3 gave approval for a Gay Pride event in Jerusalem, setting up a possibly violent confrontation between gay activists and ultra-Orthodox Jews. At press time, the event was set for June 21. Police spokesperson Micky Rosenfeld said the event will take place, but it was not determined whether it would be a march. "There will be some kind of an event," he said, "either a parade or a gathering." Opponents of the Gay Pride event have already vowed to resist, saying open displays of homosexuality have no place in the city that is holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims. Last year, ultra-Orthodox Jews rioted for more than a week after police approved a march in the center of the city. In the end, police confined the event to a soccer stadium to prevent clashes. An earlier march in Jerusalem resulted in violence when a protester stabbed three of the marchers in downtown Jerusalem. A yearly Gay Pride march in Tel Aviv usually proceeds without incident.

ITALY

Gays demonstrate in Rome to demand rights for couples

ROME (AP) — Tens of thousands of gay rights activists marched through the streets of Rome June 16 to demand legal rights for same-sex couples. Carrying rainbow-colored flags, the Gay Pride marchers demonstrators held banners criticizing the Vatican, which under Pope Benedict XVI has been conducting a fierce campaign to "protect" traditional marriage. "More Freedom, Less Vatican," read one flag featuring a crossed-out St. Peter's Basilica. "Love Equals Family," said another one. The Italian government has proposed a bill that would grant some legal rights to unmarried and same-sex couples, such as hospital visits and inheritance rights. The bill, which has angered the Vatican, stops short of legalizing gay marriage, as was done in Spain. It has yet to be taken up by parliament. The Pride march ended in the same Rome piazza where a massive rally in defense of the traditional family was held weeks ago.

ROMANIA

Attackers throw stones at Romanian gay rights marchers

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Police used tear gas against protesters who hurled stones at the annual gay rights parade in the Romanian capital June 9, officials said. About 100 people were detained for throwing stones and fireworks at police and about 400 participants in the gay rights march, said Christian Ciocan, a police spokesperson. Police responded with tear gas. Nobody was injured, he said. "We regret that our opponents use violence. ... Police only did their job to protect an authorized march," said Florin Buhuceanu, one of the organizers of the gay rights march. "It is our right to express our beliefs and we will not renounce in the face of violence." Romania decriminalized homosexuality in 2001. On June 5, two men leaving a Bucharest cinema that hosts the annual "Gay Fest" festival were beaten by eight attackers. Police stopped the attack and arrested several people.

From staff and wire reports

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Pride is what you make it

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

LEAD, FOLLOW, OR GET OUT OF THE WAY

LEAD

Gay people around the globe unite in June for annual Pride events, with activists in Moscow, Jerusalem and other cities organizing marches despite violent attacks. Hopefully we can all take their LEAD and remember that while we are mostly safe in the bubble of metro Atlanta, others in the world stare down hatred simply for a chance to be themselves.

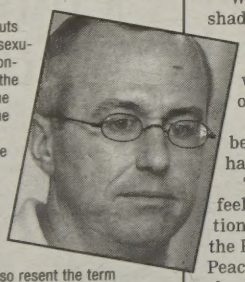
FOLLOW

G-day, gay mates. Last week, a gay couple in Australia adopted a child in what is believed to be the country's first gay adoption, made legal by a 2002 law.

We hope Georgia lawmakers will FOLLOW in the footsteps of those who live Down Under, but are definitely on top when it comes to helping children find loving homes. It's time to stop dropping hints about banning gay adoptions here and move on to fixing the state's real problems.

GET OUT OF THE WAY

Alan Chambers, president of the ex-gay money-making behemoth Exodus, last week told the Los Angeles Times that with years of therapy he's mostly conquered his attraction to men.



Chambers touts his found heterosexuality at ex-gay conferences across the country, but in the article, he says he resents the term "ex-gay" because "by no means would we ever say change can be sudden or complete."

Well, Mr. Chambers, we also resent the term "ex-gay" because, frankly, we are proud of who we are. So we ask you and others who are ex-gay for pay to GET OUT OF THE WAY or, better yet, join us in living openly and honestly.

We won't stand in the way of you living your life how you please. But don't stand in ours.

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The editorial positions of Southern Voice are expressed in editorials and in the editor's notes as determined by the editor. Other opinions are those of writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Southern Voice or its staff.

WE ALL REMEMBER OUR FIRST PRIDE. LIKE a first date with someone who will become a longtime love, the anticipation and excitement burn key moments into our memories.

Mine was 1993. I moved to Atlanta in August 1991 to attend college, missing that year's festival. The next year, I went to a family reunion instead. By '93, I was determined that nothing would prevent me from reuniting with my other "family" in Piedmont Park the last weekend of June.

When the big day came, I picked out my best sports bra and cut-offs (I was a baby dyke in the '90s, okay?), put some cash in my pocket and hit the park.

Fourteen years after my first gay festival, this weekend marks my 10th Pride as a staffer at Southern Voice. These days, the preparations are much more painstaking: The entire SoVo staff spends months planning and producing the massive Pride special issue you now hold in your hands.

My own personal planning has also grown much more complex. These days, my wife and I coordinate the hours I need to work in the SoVo tent and other events, versus the performers we want to see, versus how long we think our little girls can hack it in the blazing sun or pouring rain.

We haul out sunscreen and snacks, a shade tent, strollers, rain ponchos. My notepad, camera and press badge get stashed in the diaper bag. This is what I used to deride as "getting old."

Yet somehow, despite a decade of being "professionally gay," Pride still hasn't become just work for me.

The moment I step foot in the park, I feel the spark of that initial anticipation. By the time the SoVo contingent in the Pride Parade rounds the corner from Peachtree onto 10th Street, thousands of cheering queers lining the streets, I'm wearing the same awestruck grin I sported back in 1993.

The sheer volume of Pride attendees gets me every time. Look around you: With this many proud people in all of our diverse splendor, how can we not win?

BUT LIKE EVERY RELATIONSHIP THAT LASTS beyond the first date, Pride can start to become routine, leading us to take it for granted. It's easy to criticize the huge festival, which faces the impossible task of trying to be all things to all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

The hard-working folks on the Atlanta Pride Committee take heat from all sides — from those who want bigger name entertainers and those who think the event should move indoors and charge admission, to those who decry any corporate involvement and think the whole festival should be more serious and overtly political.

It's been 14 years since my first date with Atlanta Pride. As with any lasting relationship, what you get out of Pride depends on what you put in.

Pride belongs to all of us, so festival organizers should be open to any suggestions for ways to make it even better. Yet many of the most common criticisms can be assuaged if we view Pride as a means, not an end.

At its best, Pride is a venue, in the most literal sense of the word. It's a location for a broad expanse of groups to get their message out. That means the drag queens and the gay dads, and everyone in between. And no, those two groups aren't mutually exclusive anyway.

Sure, Pride is a venue for companies to hawk their wares to gay buyers. But it's also a venue for small non-profits to reach more people in a weekend than they might otherwise see in a year.

Luckily, more and more people seem to realize that. Last year, a group of progressive activists tried to get Pride Parade marchers to veer from the route for a rally at the state capitol (where lawmakers were not even in session).

This year, many of the same folks, from Queer Progressive Agenda, will march in the Pride Parade while other members perform a reenactment of the Stonewall Riot — an excellent idea that should be a must-see.

AS GEORGIA BECOMES INCREASINGLY conservative, it's easy to look at the hundreds of thousands who turn out at Pride and wonder what life in the state would be like if we all also showed up to vote or to lobby the legislature.

I'm usually the first to back a good grassroots protest, but I don't think replacing the fun side of Pride with intensive lessons on political organizing is the answer.

An interesting thing happened this year at Capital Pride in Washington, D.C. In an effort to make the festival more diverse, organizers sponsored a day of mostly educational "Trans Pride" events.

The Washington Blade, SoVo's sister publication, publishes a reader comment column similar to our Soapbox. The feedback they got from one transgender reader was telling: The reader wanted to know why trans Pride-goers got stuck with programs about the same problems they deal with every day, while everyone else got to have fun. In short, where was the party?

Atlanta Pride got a similar reaction a few years ago, when organizers added a series of gay issues workshops in the park, and most drew sparse attendance.

We need, and deserve, a day to celebrate. Here again, Pride should be a means, not an end — empowering and energizing us for the rest of the year.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER WAYS TO make Pride more meaningful:

- **TRY SOMETHING NEW:** There's nothing wrong with partying at Pride. But if your primary contact with gay Atlanta comes through nightlife, challenge yourself to do more for Pride weekend than just going out.

If you spend your days fighting the good fight for gay rights, give yourself some time out to just sit on a blanket in the grass. Ditto with every other niche in our city's huge gay community.

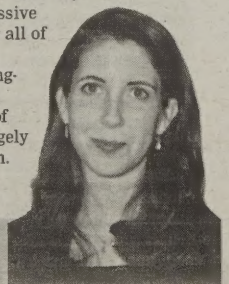
Often, when people complain that Pride is the same every year, it's because they do the same things.

- **REACH OUT:** Besides reaching out to aspects of gay Atlanta life that are outside of your usual circles, reach out within your circle of friends.

Take the time to catch up, not only for your personal relationships, but because these are the bonds that will link us in times of true crisis — giving us a network to rally quickly.

- **GIVE BACK:** Pride doesn't charge admission, and shouldn't. But few among us can't afford to throw a few dollars in the collection buckets each day to pay for the massive venue created for all of us.

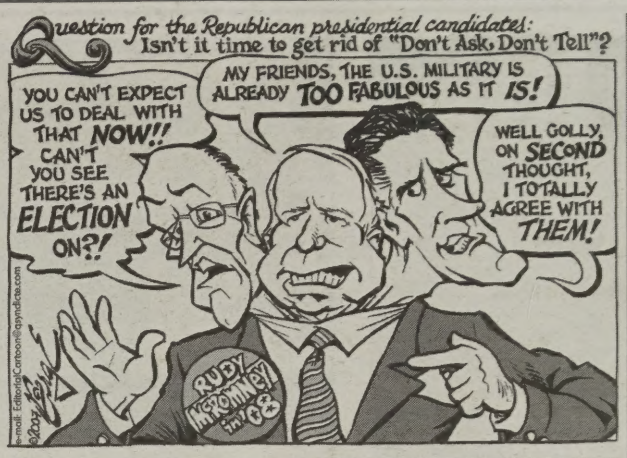
As with any long-term relationship, what you get out of Pride depends largely on what you put in.



Editor Laura Douglas-Brown can be reached at ldbrown@sovo.com

soap box

SOVO SOUTHERN VOICE


Question for the Republican presidential candidates:
Isn't it time to get rid of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"?
YOU CAN'T EXPECT US TO DEAL WITH THAT NOW!! CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S AN ELECTION ON?!
MY FRIENDS, THE U.S. MILITARY IS ALREADY TOO FABULOUS AS IT IS!
WELL GOLLY, ON SECOND THOUGHT, I TOTALLY AGREE WITH THEM!
RUDY GIULIANI '08
Editorial Cartoon@gaynd.com

To read the articles that inspired these comments from readers, or to submit your own comments on the gay issues of the day, visit **www.sovo.com** and click **Sound Off**.

Boycott gas stations with anti-gay policies

Re "Pride at the pump" (news, June 8):

Guess who will never shop at Exxon again? I wish I had known earlier. Anyone that feels that way certainly doesn't need our money. If you don't think gays can boycott, look at Donna Summer, Anita Bryant, Georgia gubernatorial candidate Cathy Cox, the advertisers that pulled out of Dr. Laura's t.v. show and now Isaiah Washington. We've also had one of the most successful boycotts in history, as Coors eventually made amends with same-sex domestic partner benefits. Let's hang a closed sign on any Exxons in Atlanta. Sometimes we forget our powerful we really are.

People [who only care about convenience when shopping] make me sick. It is all about them and if it isn't it doesn't matter.

Time for some '60s-style protests in Atlanta

Re "Pride at the pump" (news, June 8):

As long as there is no organized raising of cain about discrimination there will be no changes. Cracker Barrel finally changed its policies against gay people after several years of discrimination and multiple sit-ins. Winn-Dixie was notorious for discrimination back in the 1980s. They finally went bankrupt when the protests became relentless. Boycotts have to be well organized and ongoing with leaders dedicated for the long haul to be effective. There have to be demonstrators in front of the stations every day. Consumers have to be cooperative and drive down the road a couple miles to get gas somewhere else. The location of that station has always made it a popular stop. It has been there as long as I can remember and both of those stations have always been very expensive. With gas so high, people are not likely to be willing to go somewhere else on principle unless it is publicly embarrassing and socially irresponsible not to. Conservatism and "me first" attitudes have infiltrated even the most liberal and open-minded of our society. Black people vote Republican and complain about Mexicans and "black gay pride," once a neighborhood celebration has continued and grown. Apparently it is still considered necessary or it would have disappeared or at least become irrelevant. Until the social values of the 1960s return and it is the norm rather than the exception for people start caring about one another again, improvement in social conditions will be slight and will last only as long as a term of Congress. There are signs of hope on the national scene, but if the states don't follow suit and boot out the conservatives, not much will get done. Sonny Perdue was made governor as a protest against Roy Barnes for disrespected the teachers, but he is still in there and Georgia continues to pass conservative laws. It is time for some genuine '60s style social protest and leaders with the strength and power of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Opposing views on military's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy

Re "General who called gay sex 'immoral' to retire" (www.sovo.com, June 8):

As a former U.S. Air Force pilot, and not exactly gay-friendly, I find this whole issue of gays in the military to be a bunch of nonsense. The military has very strong rules about fraternization between members within the same chain of command that should cover any issues involving sex (homosexual or heterosexual) between members of the armed forces. I have never understood why gay sex was singled out as particularly troublesome for the military. In my experience I knew of commanders having sex with subordinates, and less troublesome sex between soldiers not in a position to rate each other's professional performance.

I highly disagree with the notion that calling one's actions immoral is lacking in respect. I'm sure there are plenty of heterosexual soldiers out in the field defending their country while cheating on their wives at the same time. This is immoral. But not everything they do is immoral. I don't have to respect everything a person does in order to respect them. On the other hand, I agree with the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy," as I do believe that it is unprofessional to discuss your sexuality on the job regardless of who you are or are not having sex with.

Iraq War is justified and gay people are immoral?

Re "General who called gay sex 'immoral' to retire" (www.sovo.com, June 8):

It's interesting that General Pace says, "I do not believe the United States is well served by a policy that says it is OK to be immoral in any way." What about the immoral war the United States is presently conducting in Iraq that has resulted in the death and injury of tens of thousands of people?

We are in very serious trouble when the military is wasting time and resources worrying about the sexual escapades of its service members while they are involved in a war where thousands of soldiers have died or been permanently disfigured.

THE Q

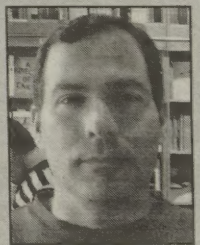
What is your most vivid Pride memory?

I went to New York Pride last year. It was crazy and awesome.
Victoria Hamilton, 38
Snellville

I was drunk and someone asked about a tattoo that I had. I forgot that I lose spatial relationships when I'm drunk and I pulled my pants down in front of a cop and forgot to stop before I got to my business and fell. The cop shook his head and walked away.
Justin Mercer, 29
West Midtown

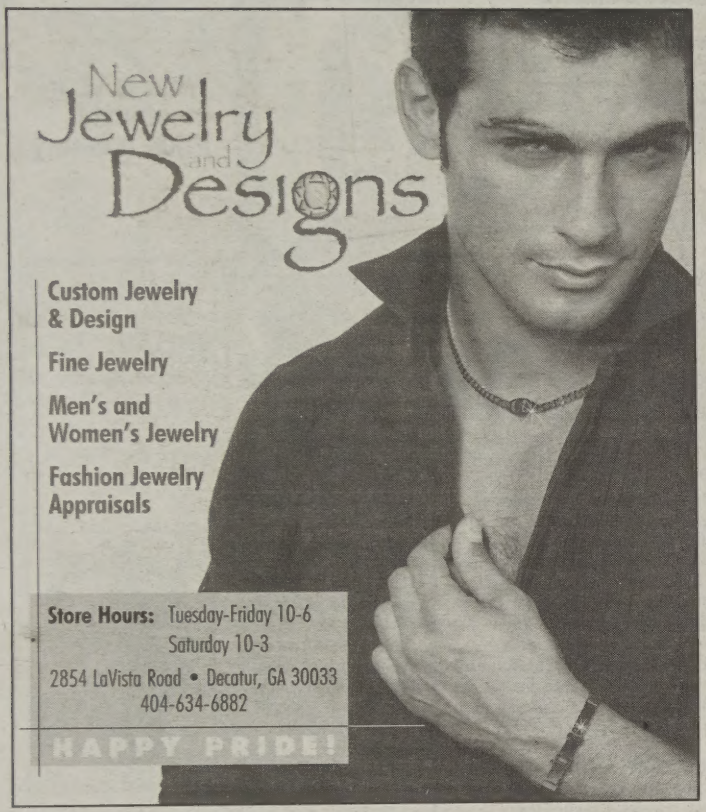
I lost my virginity at Boston's Pride.
Philip Highfill, 43
Midtown

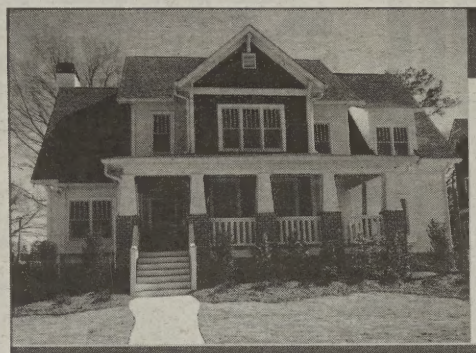
Being the first person to dance with my partner at a major medical conference.
Chuck Heath, 48
Decatur



In New York, being really hot and cranky and punching my then-boyfriend in the arm for saying something I'd asked him not to say before.
David Simpson, 44
Virginia-Highland

Compiled by Rob Beck





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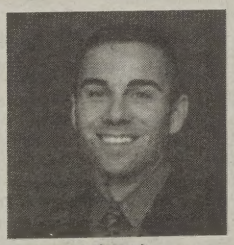

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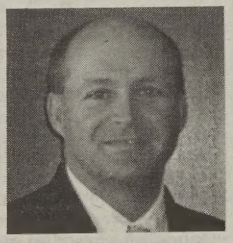

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HELMET

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One of my favorite quotes of all time is from Mark Twain: "I never let schooling interfere with my education." I love this quote because it addresses our everyday lives, our ability to turn ordinary experiences into adventures. If we take this attitude, it encourages us to draw our own conclusions, despite what we may have been told or taught; to follow our own paths; to see and embrace opportunity when the universe presents it.

HELMET has been such an amazing part of my life education. Those of us who are a part of it know that it transcends the traditional model of hair salon. My vision in the beginning holds true today: to provide a great hair service, a relaxed environment, and a really good time, remembering all the while that we are artists with a mission to serve. There are no words to describe the gratitude I feel toward my incredible team, having grown to 33 stylists, 4 massage therapists, a nail artist, 4 salon coordinators, and an operations manager. Whew!

We laughingly call our salons "the island of misfit toys." We didn't do such a great job of assimilating in our previous environments. We're an opinionated bunch, very different from one another, yet dedicated to a common purpose: to make you glad you chose us as your service provider, your confidant, your image. We learn as much as we can from one another as well as from other professionals far and wide. We travel to shows, to classes, and have guest artists share their expertise. Trends change so quickly, which is why we are in the midst of developing an artistic team and why we've had an education director for over a year now. The process of creating a look for a client is an organic process, a balance of skill, communication, and artistic vision. No matter how big or small HELMET becomes, I want to ensure that we never forget that our salons are true studios, where art is created, and where you, the client, can be both inspiring and inspired.

There is a trend right now in the salon industry that can lead us all down the wrong path. There are places that want to distract you with pricey furniture and legions of stylists dressed alike, hoping you'll forget that you're in an assembly line. You won't find that at HELMET. You'll find comfort, laughter, and artists working in an environment that constantly changes and reflects the vision to which we subscribe. We believe that personality is paramount to a memorable service, and we show ours continuously, while hoping to learn more about yours.

HELMET recently celebrated its fourth anniversary. During these four years we've established wonderful relationships with American Crew, Aveda and, most recently, Bumble and Bumble. These relationships just add to our ability to increase the quality of your experience. Last November, we welcomed our fourth location into the HELMET family. In addition to our first and largest location in Midtown, we have our second studio on Moreland Avenue in East Atlanta, our third location inside Gravity Fitness on Faulkner Road just off Cheshire Bridge, and our newest studio in Virginia Highlands, just behind Sala and the Post Office. We know you like convenience, so as we've grown, we've seized the opportunity to serve you in more accessible locations with plenty of parking.

Thank you for trusting us, for being our ambassadors, and for giving us the opportunity to be a small part of the face you show the world each day. Without you, we don't exist.

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Sincerely,

Randy

Randy Addison
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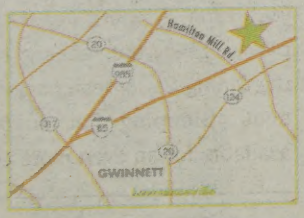

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Gay Pride: A force that demands respect

viewpoint
KARLA DRENNER

Gay Pride Month is good politics. But we're gay every day. How can we stay united the other 11 months of the year?

WHY IS GAY PRIDE MONTH SO IMPORTANT? Why do we put so much effort into it? It's because we want to be seen and heard throughout the wider world. We want to make a difference in our lives and the lives of people like us. We want everyone to know who were are and why we gather each year to celebrate what it means to be us.

Sounds like good politics to me.

How can we be ignored? We're certainly colorful enough. Why don't straight people want to listen to us and to our concerns? Could it be that we aren't putting our message out very often? Sure, there's the day we parade. Yes, we spend the month of June out, about and proud of it.

But we're gay every day. What do we need to do maintain a spirit of unity the other 11 months of the year?

IF YOU THINK through history, lots of unfairly disadvantaged groups have taken to the streets in protest. The 19th century belonged to advent of women's suffrage. The 20th century was the time for people of color and courage to shout their message. Gays need to appropriate the 21st century. This is our time.

It has been a pleasure during my seven years in office to walk with a strong cadre of stalwart soldiers who are fighting the good fight, especially Georgia Equality, our statewide, nonpartisan advocacy group. We, however, need many more gays to stand with us.

Marching to freedom isn't just about writing a check (for which we are always grateful). It's also about sweat equity, about knocking on doors in neighborhoods that might be hostile and about keeping the faith in the face of adversity. So, come out, come out, wherever you are!

I NEED TO TELL YOU THAT GAYS ARE GOING to be targets in the upcoming session of the Georgia General Assembly. It will be an election year, and a lot of my colleagues need to have somebody to put down to make their constituents feel better about themselves. Who's left to browbeat? Gays and immigrants.

While the 2004 gay marriage campaign showed us just how horrible people can be, our troubles do not end there. Take this past session, for instance. One representative attempted to attach an amendment to a juvenile court and adoption bill. This amendment meant to prohibit same sex couples from adopting children.

Our work didn't end that day; there are many more issues to ponder.

Among them are dissolving gay-straight alliances from colleges and universities that are funded by the state. Women who are not legally married may be barred from artificial insemination. Think about it. We may have to take on a self-imposed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" stance in order to get around these hateful laws.

Thus, we must forget about complacency. We've got to come out fighting. We need to organize now. We need to call on talent from all of Georgia's 159 counties.

January's not far away, and while we have a sense of what could happen, we must be prudent and prepare ourselves for battles that can occur with only a moment's notice, as it was with the gay adoption amendment. Please understand that these moves can take just a few minutes. That's simply how the Georgia General Assembly works.

Our opponents have been successful because they have put together a political machine that recognizes that the individual is what makes laws, not the machine itself.

Let's get together under one banner and maintain our uniqueness.

Let's be proud.

Gay adoptions may again be in the crosshairs when the Georgia General Assembly convenes under the Gold Dome in January.

State Rep. **Karla Drenner** (D-Avondale Estates) is serving her fourth term in the Georgia General Assembly, where she is the only openly gay legislator. She can be reached at www.karladrenner.org.

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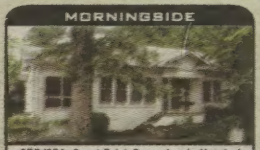

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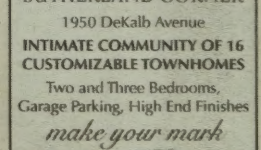

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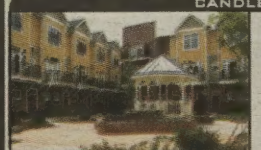

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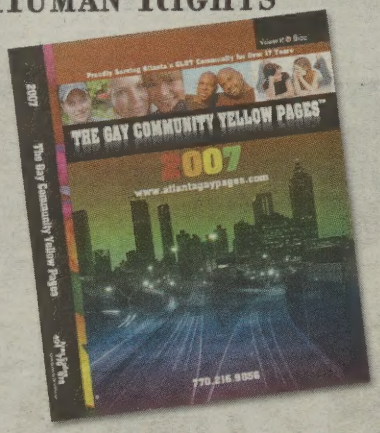

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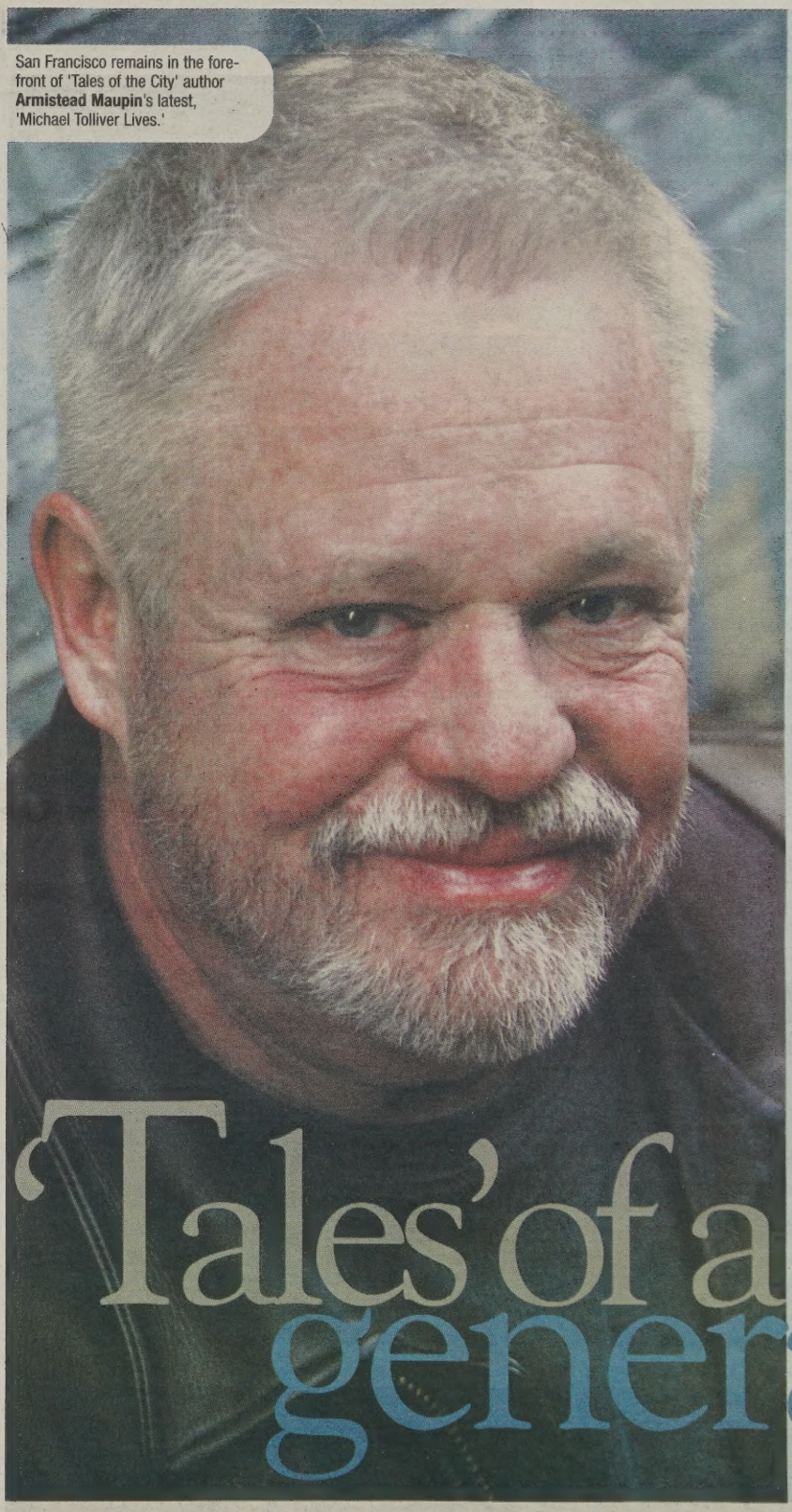

San Francisco remains in the forefront of 'Tales of the City' author **Armistead Maupin**'s latest, 'Michael Tolliver Lives.'

SO SOUTHERN VOICE VO scene

'Tales' of a generation

Armistead Maupin and his famous gay character are 'survivors of the '70s'

ARMISTEAD MAUPIN HAS SETTLED NICELY INTO HIS ROLE as elder statesman of all things gay, and he isn't even that old.

At least as many people know Maupin, 62, through his commentary for documentaries and television specials about topics of gay interest as do the millions who discovered him through his "Tales of the City" novels.

"I'm happy to hold forth on the subject of being gay," he laughs. "I've tried to testify about our condition. That's what my life has been about."

AIDS was the condition that almost prevented Maupin from revisiting the "Tales" novels after "Sure of You," in 1989.

Then he discontinued the series because he would have been forced to write a death scene for Michael Tolliver, the sweet, southern gay man whose follies lit up the first six "Tales" books. Michael learned he was HIV positive in "Sure of You."

But then, something — actually, a lot of things — began to change. The "Tales" novels were loved for their drama, but also for the prescient way in which they captured the eras in which they were set. By the late 1990s, Maupin realized that the world around him was one he could still capture — and more importantly, one in which Michael Tolliver could thrive.

"Well, the world changed, didn't it? Protease

Please see **MAUPIN** on **Page 79**

MondoHomo, Page 81 • Lesbian anthology, Page 84 • Post-Pride events, Page 94

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'Tales' character helps chronicle gay men's aging

MAUPIN, continued from **Page 77**

inhibitors came along, and AIDS was no longer a certain death sentence," the author says. "And one day, I looked around and saw that so many of my friends were still alive and functioning, and it occurred to me that Michael would be as well."

As a 55-year-old HIV-positive gay man in "Michael Tolliver Lives," the title character grapples with issues eerily similar to the ones he had in his 20s in the first "Tales" novels. He has false starts with his self-esteem, wonders if he is desirable, and deals with concerns about his relationship with his partner, Ben.

"MICHAEL TOLLIVER LIVES" IS NOT, ACCORDING to Maupin, a continuation of the "Tales of the City" series. In the first place, it's told from Michael's first person point of view. Also, while familiar "Tales" faces return, the story is wholly about Michael.

"I thought that people who were used to the old format — following multiple plot lines in third person — would be disappointed when they arrived at a novel that was different," Maupin says. "I wanted to dig deeper into Michael, and first-person seemed the way to do it.

"I made a point of saying that it was not a continuation of the serial, but in fact, it is a continuation of the story," he explains.

The close parallels between character and creator are obvious. Maupin and Michael are gay men of the same generation, from similar backgrounds, who both came out early in a time when they could expect little, if any, acceptance.

Maupin is HIV negative, but his current life continues to mirror Michael's in a number of ways.

Both Ben, Michael's fictional partner, and Christopher Turner, Maupin's real-life husband, are about 30 years younger than their partners.

The relationships raise eyebrows on the page and in reality.

"I think people make all sorts of assumptions, but they don't bother me because Chris and I always see the purity and the rightness of what we have," Maupin says.

He defends Turner, a website owner and developer, against any notion that the younger man is dependent upon Maupin for more than love and companionship.

"His income is at least at the level mine is now," Maupin says.

In the book, Michael got Ben because, as Maupin sees it, what's good for the author is good for the page.

"I thought there was a lot of humor and heart that could be mined for fiction," he says.

IN "MICHAEL TOLLIVER LIVES," READERS CAN expect an up-close and personal look at life through the eyes of a middle aged gay man — a viewpoint largely squelched because of the many voices silenced by AIDS.

Maupin made the "Tales" stories timely and long lasting by writing them as honestly as he could, he says. He continues his tradition of pulling no punches in "MTL," which includes telling depictions of sickness, death, heartache and sex.

"If I was trying to paint a cozy view of gay life that made it the same thing as heterosexual life, I certainly wouldn't have included that three way," the author says, referring to a moment when Ben and Michael open their hotel bedroom to a new friend.

Book-buyers don't seem to be put-off. The book is charting a steady trajectory up best-seller lists since its June 12 release.

"I love the notion of a story that's so thoroughly queer being embraced by mainstream America," Maupin says. "I've always enjoyed writing about all of humanity, but in this instance, I wanted to celebrate Michael, and the people who have lived his life for so long."

If few voices like Maupin's remain, then he says he's even more obligated to tell the story of people similar to him.

"The truth is attractive enough," he says. "I think gay people have always had a lot to offer the world."

MORE INFO
Armistead Maupin
June 27, 8 p.m.
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991 Piedmont Ave., 404-607-0082
www.outwritebooks.com
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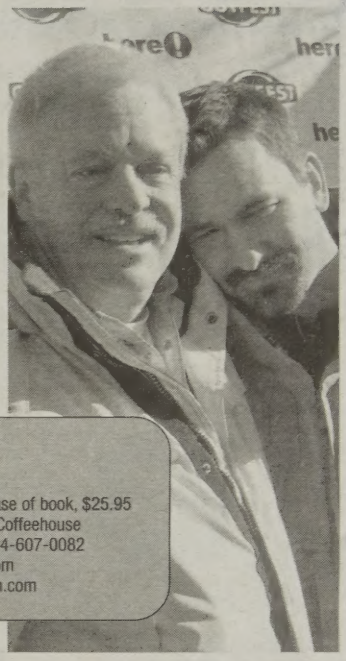

Armistead Maupin drew on his May-December relationship with partner **Christopher Turner** to inform 'Michael Tolliver Lives.'

Intown excitement.

All information is believed to be correct, but is subject to change and is not warranted.

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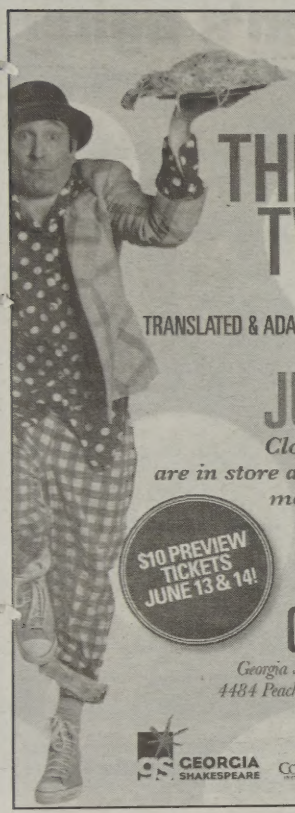

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First U.S. Social Forum includes sexual identity rights

Local activists to 'queer' confab expected to attract 10,000 people from across nation

By DYANA BAGBY
dbagby@sovo.com

Three days after Atlanta Pride ends, thousands of community organizers and activists arrive in the city for the first U.S. Social Forum that will tackle social and economic justice issues including rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Organizers of the USSF are expecting at least 10,000 people from as far away as Alaska and Guam to converge in Atlanta June 27-July 1. With the theme "Another World is Possible, Another U.S. is Necessary," those attending the forum represent community, national and international organizations, and plan to speak out on issues they say politicians and the government often ignore.

"We will be discussing every conceivable topic — the environment, housing, the war in Iraq, Katrina, education, healthcare, workers' rights," says Alice Lovelace, USSF national lead organizer.

"You look at the course of the world and we're heading toward an oligarchy. The primary reason to have this forum is to return society back to the people."

The USSF is an outgrowth of the World Social Forum, a gathering of activists that has grown from 15,000 to more than 150,000 people since the first meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001.

The WSF was formed for individuals and organizations to find ways together to achieve social, peace and economic justice, Lovelace says.

The last World Social Forum was held in January and attracted 75,000 participants to Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme, "People's Struggles, People's Alternatives."

Numerous regional social forums across the U.S. have been held leading up to the USSF in Atlanta, Lovelace says. Atlanta was selected to host the first USSF because of its long history in the civil rights movement.

"The South has seen lots of repression and lots of resistance," says National Planning Committee member Jerome Scott.

The U.S. Social Forum will focus on six key struggles, Lovelace says. They are: Gulf Coast Reconstruction in the Post-Katrina Era; War, Militarism and the Prison Industrial Complex; Indigenous Voices: From the Heart of Mother Earth; Immigrant and Migrant Rights in a Global Society; Liberating Gender and Sexuality: Integrating Gender and Sexual Justice Across Our Movements; and Workers' Rights in the Global Economy.

About 900 workshops are planned, with expectations for 25 to 30 workshops to be organized "on the spot" each day, Lovelace says.

According to Lovelace, it was important to include gender and sexuality, including gay rights, because these human issues are often used as wedge issues to drive communities apart.

"[GLBT] issues will be discussed at this forum more than any other social forum," Lovelace adds.

"We want to speak what we are in favor of, not what we oppose," she says. "And when we gather in groups, we show we are mightier than politics and politicians."

PRIDE GOERS URGED TO ATTEND USSF

Taking part in the USSF will be Atlanta's own Queer Progressive Agenda, founded by Deepali Gokhale, with the mission of broadening what she said is the mainstream gay rights movement that primarily focuses on issues such as marriage, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

"The U.S. Social Forum is in line with QPA's mission," she says. "We want to look at things through an intersectional lens and move beyond the gay rights agenda."

And while QPA is inclusive of marriage equality, eliminating DADT and implementing ENDA, the organization wants to take a more holistic approach.

"We don't want to look at everything from just the gay rights point of view," Gokhale says. "Most of us have more than a gay agenda — we are women, people of color, working class and poor. We are interested in how all forms of oppression are connected, not just a single issue."

Joining QPA in "queering the forum" will be Southerners on New Ground and ZAMI, Atlanta's group for lesbians of African descent. As part of QPA's presence at the USSF, the group plans to stage a reenactment of the Stonewall Riots during USSF's Opening March on June 27.

A dress rehearsal of the reenactment will take place during the Atlanta Pride parade on June 24 and a USSF contingent will march in the Pride parade.

QPA will also host a workshop at the USSF on its Transgender People of Color Workers Project that was formed to help trans sex workers find legal, sustainable employment, Gokhale says.

"I really hope that people who come to Pride will then come to the USSF the following week," Gokhale adds.

"I think it's important for gay people to be involved in these conversations [on poverty, the environment, Katrina relief] so other folks will see us outside a single [gay] issue and take us more seriously.

"It is good to have curiosity and to have a queer presence in these conversations. We want to move queer politics to the left, but also go into these progressive communities so queer people are not left out," she says.

People dance during the Jan. 20 opening of the World Social Forum in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. The first U.S. Social Forum, an outgrowth of the WSF, will be held in Atlanta June 27-July 1. (Photo by Karel Prinsloo/AP)

QUEERING THE USSF

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MondoHomo adds queer rhythm to revolution

'Dirty South' fest brings homo hip hop, other artists to Atlanta days after Pride

By RYAN LEE
rlee@sovo.com

Visiting a gay bookstore during a recent trip to Seattle, Nikki Chotas realized that buzz is building around her big queer idea of starting "a revolution you can dance to."

Chotas overheard a couple of customers talking about making a cross-country trip to check out MondoHomo — a five-day gay indie music and arts festival Chotas concocted with fellow Atlanta lesbian Kiki Carr. Strategically scheduled after Gay Pride and alongside the U.S. Social Forum, MondoHomo features dozens of independent artists at various bars and venues throughout intown Atlanta from June 27 through July 1.

"We thought, there'll be all these progressive activists in town [for the U.S. Social Forum], it will be right after Pride, all this energy will be there — now is the time to do it," Carr says of the early brainstorming sessions for MondoHomo.

After experiencing gay music events like the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and hearing about the Homo-A-GoGo concert series in Olympia, Wash., Carr and Chotas wanted to bring a similar gathering of artists to Atlanta — while adding a little local flavor to the standard recipe for queer music confabs.

"We've paid a lot of attention and tried to make this as diverse a festival as possible, and it's coming to fruition," says Carr, who is particularly excited about MondoHomo featuring the HomoRevolution Tour — a collection of gay rappers from across the country.

The HomoRevolution Tour hits Atlanta as part of MondoHomo on June 29.

"Atlanta is Ground Zero for hip hop — it's so ingrained in the culture here, and it's such a fertile bed for hip hop," Carr says. "I'm really interested to see how Atlanta's going to welcome [the gay hip hop performers] and how those people will like the South."

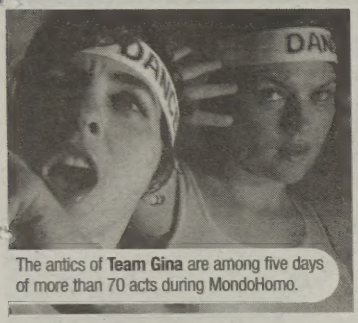
Jose Ramirez Jr. — AKA Bigg Nugg — has never been to Atlanta or the South, but says he can't wait for MondoHomo and the HomoRevolution show at MJQ nightclub on June 29.

The Ohio-based rapper says he appreciates the egalitarian environment MondoHomo is promoting.

"I don't think there's really one headliner — everyone holds equal ground," he says.

Please see MONDO HOMO on Page 82

MondoHomo puts focus on queer indie art



The antics of **Team Gina** are among five days of more than 70 acts during MondoHomo.

MONDO HOMO, continued from **Page 81**

'TOUR IS SO DIVERSE'

Homos in hip hop face hurdles gaining credibility their counterparts in the genre and garnering attention among some gay music fans .

"It's like, no, that doesn't really exist," Bigg Nugg says of the perception of gay rappers.

The Atlanta leg of the HomoRevolution Tour — a national tour of queer hip hop artists — includes Bigg Nugg, Deadlee, Feloni, Tori Fixx, Shorty Roc, JFP and Foxxjazell.

"What we're bringing with this tour is so diverse," says Bigg Nugg, noting that the MondoHomo line-up includes black, white, Latino, lesbian and transgender rappers.

"We all have the same vision — not so much to be rappers, but to take it upon ourselves to speak for gay people on every level," Bigg Nugg says.

MONDO HOMO & USSF

MondoHomo partners with the U.S. Social Forum on June 29 to present a panel discussion on gays and hip hop, as well as a forum on the intermingling of sex, queer relationships and politics.

On June 28, MondoHomo hosts a Social Forum workshop on "radical queer elders" that will feature Jayne County, a transgender Georgia native who participated in the Stonewall Riots and was influential in New York's underground music scene in the '70s.

County recently delighted Carr and several other local queers by offering an oral history of what it was like to be at Stonewall.

"People were literally in tears — it was so moving to hear our history from somebody who's still politically radical and active in the community," Carr says.

In addition to about 70 acts over five days, MondoHomo also features opening and closing night parties, art exhibits, and a street festival with a carnival theme among other events.

MONDOHOMO LINEUP
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My Sisters' Room
1271 Glenwood Ave.

Mondo Blastoff, 9 p.m.
The Earl, $10
488 Flat Shoals Road
Team Gina, KIN, One Hand Loves the Other, Akil, Natalie Ilium, DJ Va Jay Jay

Mary's, $5
1287 Glenwood Ave.
Paul Mercer, Fagatrons, team heat wave, Johnny Mae, Akil, DJ Hawg-Tied, MC 5-hr Boner.

THURSDAY JUNE 28
Speak Your Mondo, 7 p.m.
Tower II Lounge, $10
735 Ralph McGill Blvd.
PhoeniX YZ, Ami Mattison, Amber Dawn, Bad Kat, DJ Vick of Traxx, Lot Six, Dr. Madelyn Hatter, Theresa Davis, Beki Buchanan, Adriana, Stacie Boschma, Corey Houlihan, Sam Martin, Dustin Brookshire, Karen G, kathleen delaney

Mondo Moxie Cabaret, 9 p.m.
Lenny's Bar
307 Memorial Drive
Cakalak Thunder drum corp, Ms. Cherry Galette, Leroi the Girl Boi, Karissa the Pole Dancer, Destiny Brooks, Alice D, Diego Wolf, Penasco Theatre Collective, Bois 2 Men, Chica Boom, Dixie Pistols, Good N' Plenty, Al Schlong, Pilou Miller, Heywood Wakefield, DJ Fearless

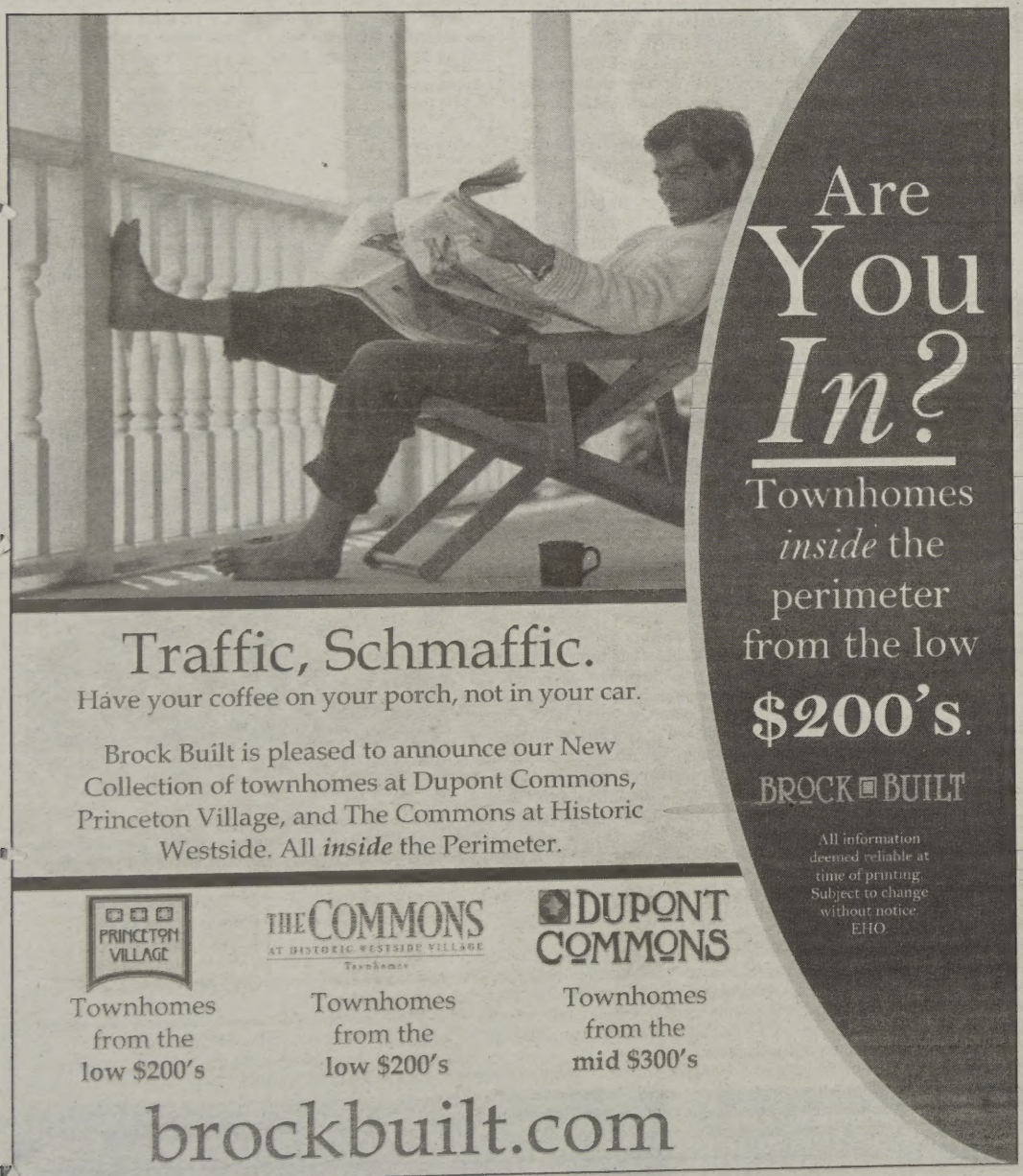
FRIDAY JUNE 29
MondoElectro, 9 p.m.
Drunken Unicorn, $10
736 Ponce de Leon Ave.
Nicky Click, Small Framed Boy, Jeremy Gloff, Johnny Rocket, Dino Felipé's Finess + Runway, Can Can

MondoHop, 11 p.m.
MJQ, $10
736 Ponce de Leon Ave.
HomoRevolution Crew: Tori Fixx, Deadlee, Feloni, Bigg Nugg, FoxxJazell, JFP, Shorty Roc, DJ of the Da Doo-Dirty Podcast, Jason Jupiter + Tom Tom, Yvonne Monet, Haute Couture.

SATURDAY JUNE 30
Mondo Cirqus, 4 p.m.
Lenny's Bar, Free
Queer Art & Crafts Fair, Team Gina, All-Girl Skateboarding Demo by Skate Like a Girl and Woody's Half-Pipe GirlCrew, interactive Jell-O Trampoline installation by Lindsey Frandsen, Giddy-up Helicopter.

Lenny's Bar, 8 p.m., $10
Katastrophe, Rising Appalachia, The Shondes, RoboSapien, Athens Boys Choir, Collin Kelley, Heywood Wakefield, MC 5-Hour Boner, DJ Business Casual.

SUNDAY JULY 1
Mondo Revolution, 4 p.m.
Eyedrum Gallery, $5
290 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.
PinkEye Film Shorts, Jayne County + the Sexual Side Effects, Hawg-Tied, MC 5-Hour Boner, DJ Business Casual, Dr. Katz, Eearless, DJ Va Jay Jay, DJ Duck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SOSCENE VO IN BRIEF

Shonia Brown, publisher of 'Longing, Lust and Love'

Locally published lesbian anthology heats up the presses

"Longing, Lust and Love," a collection of erotica by black lesbian writers released by local publisher Nghosi Books, is making a stir in both literary circles and gay and lesbian bookstores across the country. Local stores like Outwrite and Charis are reordering on a monthly basis, according to Atlanta editor and publisher Shonia L. Brown.

"Fortunately for us, sex does sell," laughs Brown, referring to the book's steamy cover image of a woman wrapped in a satin sheet.

Brown, an Atlanta writer herself and founder of Nghosi Books, says she was inspired to create the collection after difficulty getting her first novel, "A Deeper Love," published.

'Longing, Lust and Love'
300 pages, $14.95
www.nghosibooks.com

"I self-published and realized how difficult that was for me at the time," she says. "I wanted to put out my second novel, but I also wanted to start a small publication house to support other African-American GLBT writers."

"Longing" features a contribution from literary juggernaut Laurinda D. Brown, the Lambda Literary Award winning author of "Walk Like a Man," and 24 other writers.

"I think [the book] fills a great need not only for the GLBT community, but also for other communities because it gives a realistic view of who we are," Nghosi's Brown says. "We've had a lot of good feedback from readers about that."

— Rob Beck

Midtown Arts screens two films of gay interest

Midtown Arts Cinema opens two films June 22 that are sure to draw gay audiences.

First, "Show Business: The Road to Broadway" examines the 2003-2004 season on the Great White Way. The year was unusually gay, even for Broadway theater, up to and including the Tony Awards.

The film focuses on four of the biggest new musicals that year: "Avenue Q," "Wicked," "Taboo" and "Caroline, or Change."

Each of the four, shown from rehearsal through opening night and beyond, are of gay interest. "Avenue Q" mixes gays and straights in a "Sesame Street"-for-adults show. "Caroline, or Change" is gay playwright Tony Kushner's memoir of his Louisiana childhood. "Taboo," produced by Rosie O'Donnell, is a fictionalized tale of Boy George's rise to fame, and "Wicked" is the prequel to "The Wizard of Oz."

Also at Midtown Arts, "La Vie en Rose" makes the life of Edith Piaf, one of the biggest stars of her day, seem like more than 47 years of unrelieved misery. Sure, that's why gay men love her; but even Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe and other icons had moments of happiness.

'Show Business' and 'La Vie en Rose'
Open June 22
Midtown Arts Cinema
931 Monroe Drive
www.landmarktheaters.com

Marion Cotillard's transcendent performance as the legendary singer might be even more effective if director/co-writer Olivier Dahan didn't turn Piaf's life into a jigsaw puzzle that keeps you trying to figure out how everything fits together instead of making an emotional connection.

—Steve Warren

Gay photographer's latest benefits vaccine research

Atlanta photographer and prominent hair stylist Richie Arpino is set to present 25 new photographs at an Art Spaces International show on June 23 benefiting Emory's Vaccine Research Center.

The 25 pieces, entitled "BODY = ART," juxtapose tasteful nude portraits against works of non-photographic art. The sale of Arpino's work benefits the Vaccine Research Center's work against HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C, among other diseases.

One of Arpino's exhibit photos

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Works from artists Amanda Palmer and Aleya Malacane are also part of the exhibit, but are not part of the benefit for the vaccine center.

— Rob Beck

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Photo by Greg Brown

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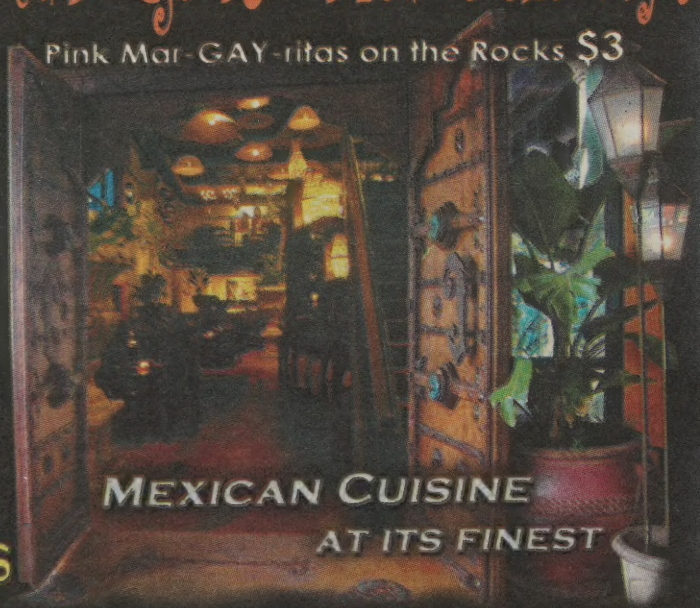

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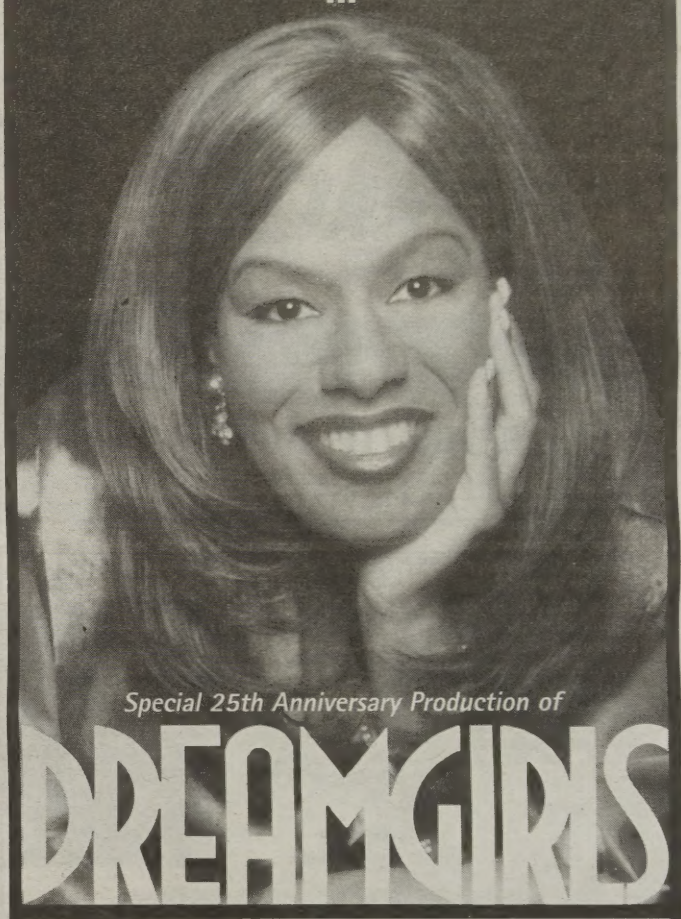

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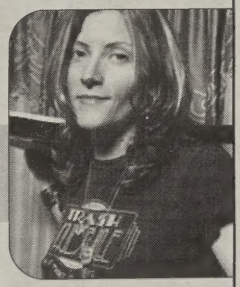

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SO VO SOUTHERN VOICE DINING

Hunger pains at Pride?

Dozens of food options just steps away from Piedmont Park

By MATT HENNIE

That turkey leg and snow cone just not hitting the spot? Fortunately for Pride-goers in Piedmont Park, if you already had your fill of festival fare, you can enjoy alternatives without losing your parking space.

Some 25 eateries are within walking distance of the park, even more if you're willing to hike as far as Ansley Mall. The roads wrapping the park — 10th Street, Piedmont Avenue and Monroe Drive — total less than three miles, meaning you don't have to walk far for variety.

In fact, you can probably grab something before your friends get out of the Porta Potty line.

START LIGHT If your desire is just a break from the masses, four coffeehouses are nearby. There's gay-owned Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse, which is always abuzz with activity during the festival. They offer light fare, books to browse and front-row seating for people-watching at the corner of Piedmont and 10th Street. There's also Caribou Coffee across the street.

Looking to cool down? Try a smoothie from Smoothie King or Planet Smoothie.

For a quick fix of Mexican, Willy's Mexicana Grill is right on the edge of the park. There's also F.R.O.G.S. Cantina in Midtown Promenade, and for something a little more formal, step into Zocalo on 10th Street.

Have a hankering for a bistro or café? Try the cozy Gilbert's Mediterranean Café on 10th Street, and two options in Amsterdam Walk: Bistro to Go and Bread Garden. Amsterdam Walk is easy to get to from the park; make your way through the back of the dog park, cross the tracks, and you're there.

TASTE FOR ETHNIC? In Midtown Promenade, Nam is an upscale Vietnamese restaurant. The retail and entertainment center also offers Desi Spice Indian Cuisine, Royal Orchid Thai Cuisine and Rice Box.

Just north of the center is Mediterranean Grill on Monroe Drive.

QUICK AND EASY Got Philly Cheese Steak? Yup. Stop by Woody's Famous Philadelphia Cheesesteaks. This spot isn't fancy, but the hot dogs and sandwiches are an Atlanta tradition. Schedule wisely; Woody's is only open for lunch and not on Sunday.

And as much as Woody's is for carnivores, meat lovers and vegetarians alike love Mellow Mushroom's pizza in Midtown Promenade.

For a quick sandwich, stop in at Subway on Piedmont or Jason's Deli on 10th Street. Both have health-conscious options and both keep you at Ground Zero of Pride. Another option is Jersey Mike's Subs in Midtown Promenade.

You might also try a little comfort food at the wildly popular Flying Biscuit on 10th Street.

FANCY For a meal with a little more flair, sit-down options with nicer surrounds dot the landscape around the park.

Nickiemoto's offers a dance-club sensibility with a flashy sushi bar and bamboo-covered patio. Sandwiches, pastas and tasty desserts with international twists can be found at Apres Diem in Midtown Promenade, and anchored in the park is Park Tavern with Southern favorites and brunch options.

The swanky One Midtown Kitchen is just up the road, and is always a good place to see and be seen.

Want a break from festival fare during Pride? Dozens of options are available by foot so you don't lose your parking space. (Photo by Sher Pruitt)

GAY FAVES Since it's Pride, don't forget the other gay favorites. Gay actor-turned-restaurateur Mitchell Anderson serves up "fresh food fast" at MetroFresh in Midtown Promenade. Cowtippers Steaks & Spirits on Piedmont Avenue is a little further up Monroe, but its sisters Joe's on Juniper and Einstein's, both on Juniper Street, are a stone's throw from the park.

For tasty treats combined with cocktails, a handful of taverns are nearby. Gay bars Blake's On the Park and Burkhart's are on 10th Street and in Ansley Square, respectively. Prince of Wales is across from the 12th Street gate on Piedmont Avenue, and the Highlander and Independent Tavern are in Midtown Promenade.

If it isn't too far for you to walk, Ansley Mall and Ansley Square have multiple options, as well as Clear Creek Center across the street.

MORE INFO:

COFFEE SHOPS AND SMOOTHIES
Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse
991 Piedmont Ave.

Caribou Coffee
1000 Piedmont Ave.

Smoothie King
1001 Piedmont Ave.
1579 Monroe Drive

MEXICAN
Willy's Mexicana Grill
1071 Piedmont Ave.

F.R.O.G.S. Cantina
Midtown Promenade
931 Monroe Drive

Zocalo
187 10th St.

OTHER ETHNIC FOOD
Gilbert's Mediterranean Café
219 10th St.

Bistro to Go
Amsterdam Walk
Monroe Drive at Amsterdam Ave.

Bread Garden
Amsterdam Walk

OTHER GOODIES
Woody's Famous Philadelphia Cheesesteaks
981 Monroe Drive

Mellow Mushroom
Midtown Promenade

Subway
1001 Piedmont Ave.

Jason's Deli
230 10th St.

Jersey Mike's Subs
Midtown Promenade

Flying Biscuit
1001 Piedmont Ave.

FANCIER
Nickiemoto's
990 Piedmont Ave.

Apres Diem
Midtown Promenade

One Midtown Kitchen
566 Dutch Valley Road

Park Tavern
500 10th St.

PERENNIAL GAY FAVORITES
Cowtippers Steaks & Spirits
1600 Piedmont Ave.

Agnes & Muriel's
1514 Monroe Drive

MetroFresh
Midtown Promenade

Joe's on Juniper
1049 Juniper St.

Einstein's
1077 Juniper St.

TAVERN FOOD
Prince of Wales
1144 Piedmont Ave.

The Highlander
Midtown Promenade

Independent Tavern
Midtown Promenade

Blake's On the Park
227 10th St.

ANSLEY MALL
1544 Piedmont Road
Moe's Southwest Grill
Starbucks
Planet Smoothie
Einstein Bros. Bagels

ANSLEY SQUARE
1492 Piedmont Ave.
Bangkok Restaurant
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China Garden
Piccadilly Cafeteria
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Friendlier skies

Another airline joins the ranks of marketing directly to gay consumers, partners with Philadelphia tourism

By TROY PETENBRINK

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES, THE LARGEST AIRLINE IN domestic traffic, just launched a section of its website specifically targeted to gay travelers.

The new pages include dedicated offers and helpful information on gay-friendly destinations and events around the country. The carrier, famous for its low-fares and jovial staff, goes as far as creating a gay-friendly logo and special frequent flyer rewards.

"We want the GLBT community to know about our low fares, excellent customer service, and great Rapid Rewards program for the same reason we want every community to know that if you love to travel, there's simply no better airline than Southwest Airlines," says Jena Atchison, Southwest's segment marketing manager.

Southwest received an 83 percent rating on the most recent Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, a benchmark of companies' gay-friendly policies. The airline is currently the only low-fare carrier with an HRC rating.

The carrier's HRC Corporate Equality Index rating is based on non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity. Southwest also provides the same health insurance and other benefits to same-sex partners as are available to married employees.

IN ADDITION TO THE NEW WEB SOURCES, Southwest is currently partnering with the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation on a $125,000 gay-friendly tourism campaign designed to increase air travel and overnight visits by gay travelers to Greater Philadelphia.

The yearlong agreement incorporates advertising, direct-to-consumer promotions and online marketing. The partnership also includes charitable contributions to gay organizations in Philadelphia.

Southwest was also a recent major sponsor of the recent Washington, D.C., gay Pride festival, much like Delta Air Lines does in Atlanta.

"Partnering with Southwest Airlines to invite gay travelers to visit from farther distances means that they will spend more time here enjoying our history and nightlife, and they will also spend more money in our hotels, shops and attractions and in the gay community," says Meryl Levitz, president and CEO of Greater Philadelphia Tourism. "We know that gay travelers spend one and half times what other travelers spend, $800 per trip/per person compared to $540 per trip/per person, according to the newest HarrisInteractive/Travel Industry of America study on gay travel."

Though new for Southwest, most major airlines now actively market to the gay travel segment, including Atlanta-based Delta, which is a 2007 sponsor for Pride events in Atlanta, Boston, Cincinnati, New York City, Salt Lake City and San Francisco, as well as Gay Days in Orlando.

The Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation recently joined Southwest Airlines to draw gay consumers to the history and nightlife in the city. (Photo courtesy gophila.com)

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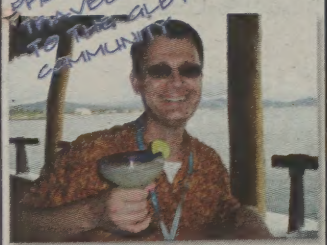

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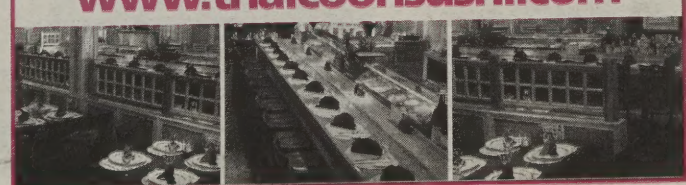

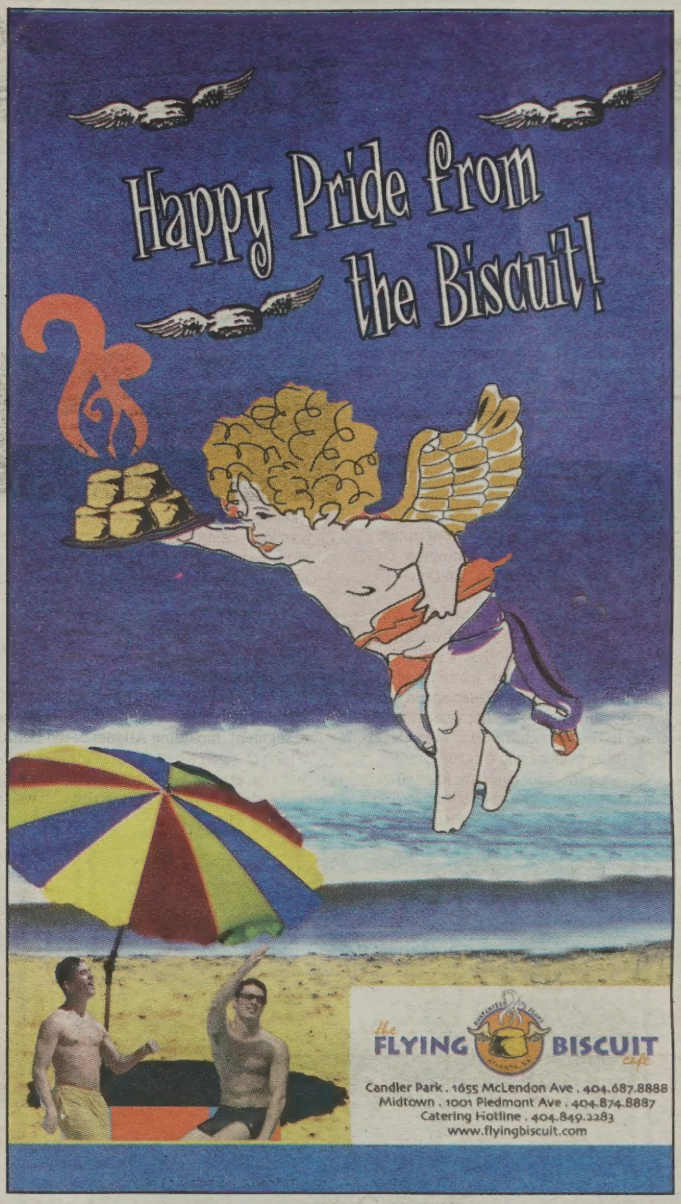
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SOUTHERN VOICE

JUNE 22 - JUNE 30

SATURDAY JUNE 23

Gay Atlanta photographer **Richie Arpino** unveils **BODY=ART**, a collection of 25 of his photographs, as part of a three-artist show benefiting Emory's Vaccine Research Center. 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. at Art Space International, 1192 Huff Road NW. 404-351-0549, www.artspaceatl.com

TUESDAY JUNE 26

Local comics **Alyssa Barnett** and **Jessica Rose** host **Gay Pride Comedy** Night. 7 p.m. at Eddie's Attic, 515-B McDonough St., Decatur. 404-377-4976, www.eddiesattic.com

WEDNESDAY JUNE 27

Armistead Maupin reads and signs his latest 'Tales of the City' installment, 'Michael Tolliver Lives.' 8 p.m. at Outwrite, 991 Piedmont Ave. 404-607-0082, www.outwritebooks.com

WEDNESDAY JUNE 27 – **MONDAY** JULY 1

MondoHomo: Dirty South brings an alternative queer arts, music and entertainment festival to town with events all over Atlanta. Check website for event details, or see story on Page 81. www.mondohomo.com

ON THE WEB: *For other calendars of special events, visit www.sovo.com.*

WEDNESDAY JUNE 27

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra provides a lush backdrop for classic singer **Natalie Cole**'s 'Unforgettable' voice. 8 p.m. at Chastain Park, 4469 Stella Drive NW. www.ticketmaster.com

FRIDAY JUNE 29

Lez Zeppelin, quite possibly the world's only lesbian Led Zeppelin tribute band, visits Atlanta. 8:30 p.m. at the Variety Playhouse, 1099 Euclid Ave. 404-249-6400, www.variety-playhouse.com

FRIDAY JUNE 29 – **SATURDAY** JULY 7

Augusta's gay campground hosts a week of **Fourth of July Festivities**. All week at the Parliament Resort, 1250 Gordon Highway, Augusta. 706-722-1155, www.p-house.com

SATURDAY JUNE 30

Sander Kleinenberg takes over the turntables. 10 p.m. at WETbar, 960 Spring St. 404-745-9494, www.wetbaratlanta.com

Country heartthrob **Keith Urban** wants 'somebody like you' to come see his Atlanta concert. 8 p.m. at Philips Arena, 1 Philips Drive. www.ticketmaster.com

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JUNE 22 - JULY 21, 2007

Visit **www.sovo.com** for expanded calendars and organization listings covering nightlife, sports, spirituality and health.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					22 **Atlanta Pride** starts. www.atlantapride.org **Pearl Day 18** at Six Flags. www.pearlday.com **YouthPride Prom**. www.youthpride.org	23 **Phil B** and **Kristine W** at WETbar. www.wetbaratlanta.com Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus **Golf Tournament**. www.afwcchorus.org **Peach** girl party at the Loft. www.pandoraultra.com
24 **2-T Fruity** with **Chus & Ceballos** at Club Opera. www.fruitcake-productions.com DJ **Michael Fierman** and **Shannon** at WETbar. www.wetbaratlanta.com	25 **'Semper Fi'** gay Marine story on Showtime. www.sho.com **'Why We Sing,'** gay choruses doc includes AGMC, airs on WPBA30. www.pba.org	26 AGLCC **Business Builder Lunch**. www.atlantagay-chamber.org Gay Pride **Comedy Fest** at Eddie's Attic. www.eddiesattic.com	27 **Armistead Maupin** at Outwrite. www.outwritebooks.com **MONDOHOMO** begins five-day fest. www.mondohomo.com **National HIV Testing Day**. www.hivtest.org	28 Accoutrements' **wine tasting** benefiting Atlanta Cotillion at Pergola. www.atlantacotillion.com **'E.T.'** on Screen on the Green. www.tcmscreenon-thegreen.com	29 **Rick Springfield, Eddie Money** and **Scandal** at Chastain. www.ticketmaster.com Atlanta Cotillion **Improv Night**. www.atlantacotillion.com	30 **Sander Kleinenburg** at WETbar. www.wetbaratlanta.com
JULY 1 **MONDOHOMO** closing party at Eyedrum. www.eyedrum.org	2 **Industry Night** at Hoedowns. www.hoedownsatlanta.com	3 **Karaoke Shootout** at Hoedowns. www.hoedownsatlanta.com	4 Southern Bears present **'Atlanta Bear All'** through July 8. www.atlantaeagle.com	5 **AEN Networking Luncheon** at Midtown Athletic Club. www.aen.org	6 **Hootie & the Blowfish** at Chastain Park. www.classichastain.org	7 **Tiffany** sings at WETbar. www.wetbaratlanta.com
8 **Big Time Drag Revue** at Blake's. www.blakesontheparkatlanta.com	9 Coke Film Fest screens **'The Wizard of Oz'** at the Fox. www.foxtheatre.org	10 Mary Edith Pitts' **Family Feud** at Burkhart's. www.burkharts.com	11 **PALS Bingo** at the Knights of Columbus. www.palsatlanta.org Coke Film Fest screens **'Dreamgirls'** at the Fox. www.foxtheatre.org	12 **College Night Gone Wild** at WETbar. www.wetbaratlanta.com	13 Three artists open exhibit at gay-owned **TEW Galleries**. www.timothytew.com Writer **Myriam Gruba** at Charis. www.charisbooksandmore.com	14 **George Acosta** comes to WETbar. www.wetbaratlanta.com
15 For the Kid's **Out About Atlanta**. www.forthekid.org	16 Charlie Brown's **Trailer Park Trash Show** at Hoedowns. www.hoedownsatlanta.com	17 Miss Edee's **'Pickin' & Grinnin'"** daytime musical show at Heretic. www.hereticatlanta.com	18 Flicks on 5th Film Fest screens **'Dreamgirls.'** www.flicksonfifth.com	19 **Nekisha Durrett** and **El Franco Lee** open at Romo Gallery. www.romogallery.com	20 **Beyonce** and **Robin Thicke** at Philips. www.ticketmaster.com **Morrissey** at Chastain. www.ticketmaster.com MEGA Family Project's **Family Vacation** weekend. www.megafamilyproject.org	21 **Atlanta Rollergirls** workshop. www.atlantarollergirls.com **Joining Hearts** at Piedmont Park pool. www.joininghearts.org

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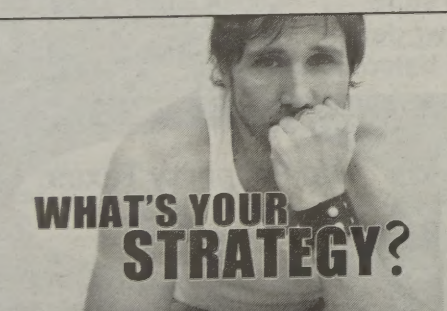

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Gay and growing older

Baby-boomer generation concerned about care as they age in heterosexual society

More than 60 people attended the second LGBT Elder Town Hall meeting held June 17 to discuss challenges and visions they see as they become senior citizens. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)

By DYANA BAGBY
dbagby@sovo.com

What does the future hold for gay Atlanta residents as they age? That's the question numerous individuals are pondering as they face becoming old in a largely heterosexual society.

At the second LGBT Elder Town Hall meeting June 17, 60 people gathered to discuss how they would like to see Atlanta's landscape evolve when it comes to caring for its elderly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents. An initial forum was held in February.

"I need a place where there are people like me," Sybil Jones, 65, said at last week's meeting. "I'm not in the closet, never have been in the closet. But I want a place where I can go to live and express what I feel."

While most people attending the meeting acknowledged medical care that comes with being older won't differ much from their straight counterparts, it is the social atmosphere of retirement villages and assisted living care facilities that causes the most angst.

"My friends and I all used to joke about opening a gay nursing home and how we'd rock ourselves to death together — and now we're here," said Craig Strain, 58, of Decatur. "What I'd like to see is the government and private sectors broaden what they offer to senior citizens."

For Tracee McDaniel, who is transgender, participating in the town hall meetings is crucial to ensuring she and other trans people are included in the development of a plan to address the aging gay population.

"I'll be 60 in about 20 years," she joked. "But I am concerned that transgender and gender variant people are involved in the conversation."

The options available to many gay people now while they are younger — shopping at a gay bookstore, eating at a gay-owned restaurant, going to gay bars and clubs — shouldn't disappear as they age, added Doug Carl.

"It would be nice if our community had an infrastructure to fall back on so as I age I still have these options," he said.

'THIS IS US' Meeting in small groups of about 10, the people attending the LGBT Elder Town Hall meeting at the Decatur Recreation Center shared the visions, fears and challenges they see themselves facing as they grow old in Atlanta.

Jones, who has been with her partner for 28 years and is currently living with her daughter and grandchildren, said she would like to see a "one-stop shop" for gay seniors or at least accepting of gay seniors. The area she envisions would include a living facility, a grocery store and other shopping options as well as a hospital care facility.

Jessica Pennington, 40, said she is hopeful marriage for same-sex couples will become legal in her lifetime so she and her partner can have the protections married couples have now as they age.

Many agreed that trying to change public policy by speaking to their state representatives is also important so the legislators can know what issues gay senior citizens are likely to face.

"We need to influence public policy to create equal access. We can't just focus on a hate crime against a 20-year old but also take on discrimination against a 65-year old," said Strain.

The Atlanta Lesbian Health Initiative and the Aging Atlanta GLBT Senior Advisory Group of the Atlanta Regional Commission organized the town hall meetings and will issue a detailed report containing comments made there, said Linda Ellis, executive director of ALHI.

She also explained that the ARC has been providing "Rainbow Train" to mainstream assisted living facilities. The program offers sensitivity and diversity training to employees and administrators of the facilities on how to care for gay people.

"We are having conversations with aging service providers to say what the GLBT community wants," she said.

"And these conversations need to continue over the next six months. This is us, this is you. We have an opportunity to create together what we want," Ellis added.

MORE INFO:

Atlanta Regional Commission Aging Project
www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/arc/hs.xsl/473_ENU_HTML.htm

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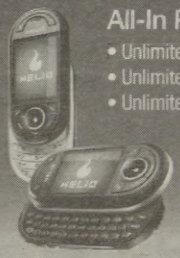

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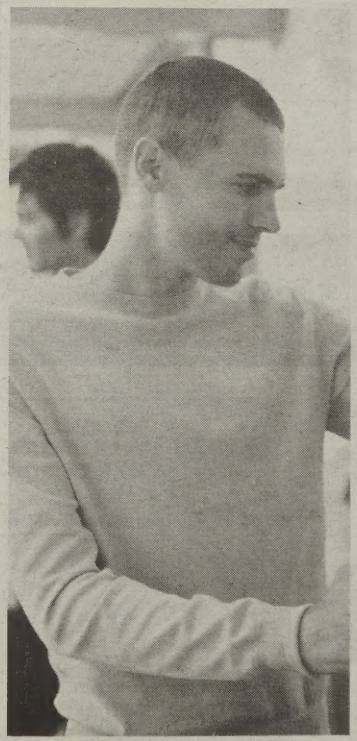

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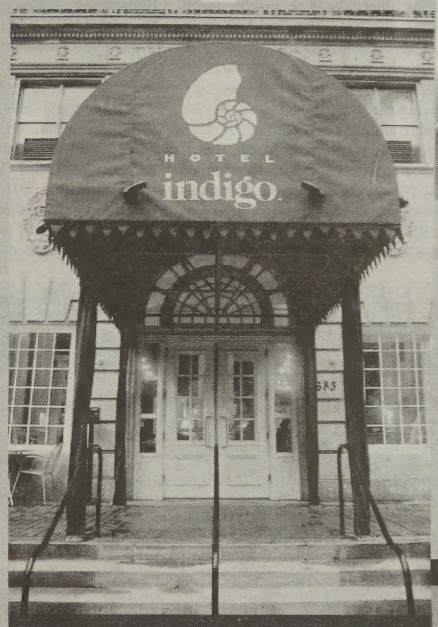

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National HIV Testing Day stresses knowing your status

Local organizations urge frequent testing if prone to risky behavior

By ROB BECK
rbeck@sovo.com

HIV/AIDS organizations across the country are joining forces for the 13th year to observe National HIV Testing Day on June 27, a joint effort begun by the National Association of People with AIDS.

Local groups including AID Atlanta, National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities, AIDS Survival Project and St. Joseph's Mercy Care Services are providing free testing at various sites around Atlanta. The groups' main focus will be the central testing site at the Morehouse School of Medicine.

AIDS Survival Project's Kevin English, associate director of prevention services, said by providing testing outside the traditional clinical setting, the organizations hope to attract people who might not normally take the opportunity to get tested.

"We'll be catching people before and after work, and it's in a centralized location," English said.

Raphael Holloway, AID Atlanta's prevention services manager in the Department of Education & Volunteer Services, said the Morehouse site was specifically chosen

Most organizations and agencies recommend the OraQuick HIV test.

to target African Americans, a population that includes two of the groups with the fastest rising infection rates.

"We are definitely targeting the African-American community," said Holloway, "because of an increased rate of HIV infection [among] black gay men and African-American women."

ANNUAL TESTS RECOMMEDED

Despite the continued disproportionate impact of HIV on men who have sex with men, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention declined to delineate specific risk factors and testing guidelines for gay men and lesbians. Instead, the CDC insists all individuals with recognized risk factors should be tested at least annually.

"This includes individuals with HIV-positive sex partners, injection drug users and their sex partners, individuals who exchange sex for money or drugs, and individuals who have had, or whose sex partners have had, more than one sex partner since their most recent HIV test," said CDC spokesperson Jill Smith. "In addition, all patients initiating treatment for tuberculosis or seeking treatment for STDs should be screened."

Holloway also noted AID Atlanta includes individuals who engage in any form of unprotected sex with a partner of unknown HIV status among those with increased risk factors, and recommends testing every three to six months. He stressed, however, that if an individual's risk behavior necessitates testing every three months, those behaviors might require reevaluation.

Danny Sprouse, associate director of prevention at Positive Impact, advised gay men in particular not to use a negative result as a gauge of what constitutes risky behavior, because even the best available tests are only accurate up to three months after infection.

"If you're having sex, it's a possibility that you could become infected," he said.

The Fulton County Health & Wellness Department is also providing testing at the Mall West End and the South Fulton Health Center on June 29. The department plans on adding a third testing site in northern Atlanta before the test date.

All testing sites are free and utilize the OraQuick rapid test. This test is widely accepted as the industry standard and is administered orally, providing results within 20 minutes. All testing sites provide mandatory counseling before and after the test, and Holloway said the process should take no more than an hour.

MORE INFO

National HIV Testing Day
June 27
www.hivtest.org

TESTING LOCATIONS

June 27

Morehouse School of Medicine
8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
720 Westview Drive
800-551-2728
www.aidatlanta.org

AID Atlanta
12 p.m. – 7 p.m.
1605 Peachtree St.
404-870-7770
www.aidatlanta.org

Mexican Consulate
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
2600 Apple Valley road
404-266-2233

Latin American Association
4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
2750 Buford Highway
404-638-1800

June 29

Mall West End
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
850 Oak St. SW
404-730-4586
www.co.fulton.ga.us/departments/health.html

South Fulton Health Center
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
1225 Capitol Ave. SW
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Navy discharges gay Arabic linguist from Ga.

Fired officer speaks out in news media, internet video

By ZACK HUDSON
zhudson@sovo.com

A gay soldier who was kicked out of the Navy will use the news media and other mass communication efforts to decry the U.S. Armed Forces "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," policy, which precludes openly gay soldiers from U.S. military service.

Former Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephen Benjamin said he joined the U.S. Navy intent upon putting his language skills to use for the good of his country. He still had about two years left to serve as an Arabic linguist and translator when he was discharged after military brass discovered he was gay.

Benjamin worked for the Navy at the U.S. Army Signal Center in Fort Gordon, Ga. He said many of his co-workers knew he was gay, but that he worked as a translator largely without incident until high-level military officials came on base for an annual inspection in 2007.

Military bosses spotted an instant message transcript between Benjamin and his roommate, a Navy officer deployed to Iraq at the time, that indicated both men were gay. During the inspection, Benjamin said 68 other enlisted and civilian personnel were disciplined for violating the military's acceptable use policy for computer communication tools. Of the group, only Benjamin and his roommate were ultimately discharged for the messages.

"We went through the disciplinary process like everyone else, and I thought it was pretty much over with. Then about a month later, I got called and they told me they were kicking us out," he said.

Benjamin, who lives in Norcross, Ga., characterized the instant message chat exchanges between himself and his roommate as "innocuous" and not of a sexual nature.

After his discharge, Benjamin shared his story with U.S. Rep. Marty Meehan (D-Mass), who has sponsored since 2005 the Military Readiness Enhancement bill that would repeal DADT. "There's 11,000 of us who have been kicked out, and there's so few of us who have actually come forward. That's why I'm doing this," Benjamin said.

Benjamin said he is looking to reach other politicians, gay soldiers and voters through an internet video available on the Service Members Legal Defense Network website. In the video, Benjamin shares his story.

His efforts are drawing attention. He authored an opinion essay denouncing DADT for the June 10 New York Times. He chatted with hard-nosed political lampooner Stephen Colbert for a June 18 appearance on "The Colbert Report."

Benjamin said he is utilizing the mass media forums to shed light on military staffing shortages — particularly for trained Arabic linguists — which he says DADT has exacerbated.

Since its implementation in 1993, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" has resulted in the dismissal of more than 11,000 men and women from the armed forces, according to SLDN. The Government Accountability Office estimates nearly 800 of those dismissed had skills deemed "mission-critical" by the Department of Defense, including more than 300 language specialists, of which 85 were proficient in Arabic. SLDN states the cost to U.S. taxpayers for maintaining the ban is estimated at more than $363 million.

After an honorable, if early, discharge from the Navy, **Stephen Benjamin** says he'll speak out for gay U.S. Armed Forces members who he says face discrimination under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'

MORE INFO:
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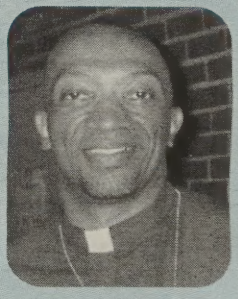

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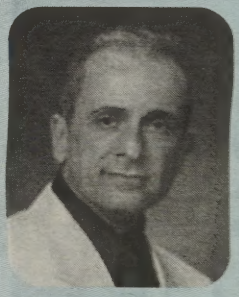

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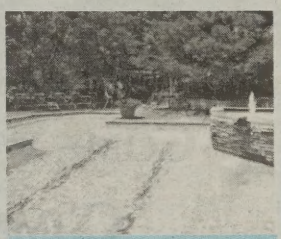

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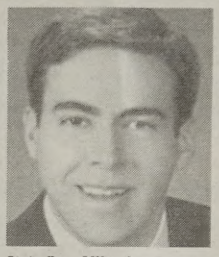
Gay-friendly state legislator switches parties



State Rep. **Mike Jacobs** of DeKalb County left the Democratic Party on June 19 to become a Republican.

State Rep. Mike Jacobs, who offered strong support of gay rights issues when running as a Democrat for the state legislature in 2004, switched parties Tuesday. The DeKalb County legislator cited his tax philosophy as the primary reason for becoming a Republican, and said his gay-friendly positions won't change along with his party affiliation.

"The main reason for this change is that I believe there is more tolerance in the Republican Party for social moderation than there is in the House Democratic caucus for fiscal responsibility," Jacobs said in an e-mail interview.

Jacobs said his closest allies in the General Assembly are moderate Republicans like Reps. Ed Lindsey (R-Atlanta) and Jill Chambers (R-Decatur). Chambers was the only member to buck her party by voting against a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage in 2004, but both she and Lindsey were given committee leadership positions by GOP House leaders.

"[That] proves to me that being a social moderate will not make me an outcast in the Republican caucus the way being fiscally responsible made me an outcast in the Democratic caucus," Jacobs said.

Georgia Equality and the Atlanta Stonewall Democrats both endorsed Jacobs in 2006. In an interview with Southern Voice during his first run for office in 2004, Jacobs said he supported gay-inclusive anti-discrimination and hate crimes legislation, and opposed any attempt to implement a gay adoption ban. After he was elected, he called the newspaper to ensure that his support of gay rights was unequivocal.

"Frankly, the GLBT community has become the whipping boy for social conservatives, and I'm tired of it," Jacobs said at the time. "The GLBT community can count on me to work to write sexual orientation into the new hate crimes legislation, hold the line on [allowing] gay adoption and foster care, and pushing for full equality."

— Ryan Lee

Ga. Equality seeks volunteers to implement political strategies

For the past several months, members of Georgia Equality, the state's largest gay rights organization, have been undergoing strategic and action planning meetings to define the group's role in securing rights for gay Georgians.

Now, the organization seeks volunteers to join teams to help implement strategic plans to achieve its stated goals.

"Our strategic and action planning looks at today and takes us through many years into the future," Kyle Williams, chair of Georgia Equality's Community & Education program, said in a statement.

Georgia Equality's political and education boards find primary strength, support and guidance from a number of teams and the organizations wants members from the public to join these teams to complete and implement its strategic and action planning, Williams added.

Teams range from political-based, events and fundraising, to community advocacy and education. Teams will meet once every other month.

Georgia Equality
404-327-9898
e-mail: geinfo@georgiaequality.org.
www.georgiaequality.org

Free media workshop offered

Stephon Collins, founder of the L.O.V.E. Coalition, says it is important for gay ethnic minorities to learn how to effectively share their stories with the media. (Photo by Bo Shell)

Atlanta's L.O.V.E. Coalition is teaming up with the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation to train gay leaders and others on how to share their stories with the media.

The workshop will provide tools for developing a personal message to the media, building relationships with journalists and conducting interviews with print, radio and TV reporters. The workshop is interactive and will include a copy of the workshop outlining essential media strategies, explained Stephon Collins, founder of the Lifting Our Voices for Equality, or L.O.V.E. Coalition. The organization is dedicated to social, political, economic and spiritual empowerment for gay men and lesbians, particularly those who are ethnic minorities.

"We're doing this for minority communities to show how we can share our stories effectively, particularly within the African-American community," Collins said.

"It is ever so important we share our stories with the broader community, not just the gay community, because our voices need to be heard," he added.

—Dyana Bagby

Media Workshop
June 26, 6 to 8 p.m.
Atlanta-Fulton County Library
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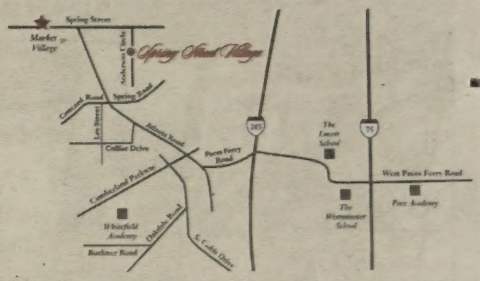

Directions: Take Paces Ferry West to the end. Make a right on Atlanta Road, cross over Spring Road/Concord, at the light in front of the Smyrna Market Village, turn right. Go over railroad and bear right on Spring Street. Make a right on Anderson Circle and the community is on the right.

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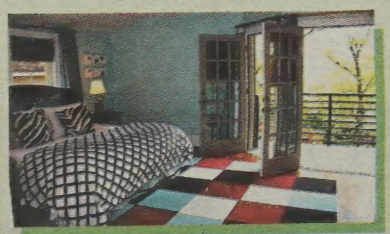

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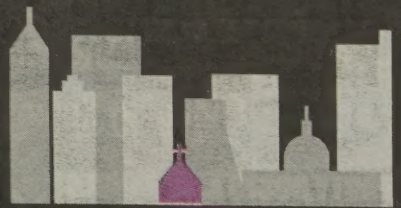

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SOVO NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

Gay marriage safe in Mass. until at least 2012

When he ran for office in Massachusetts last year, Democratic Rep. Angelo Puppolo Jr. supported efforts to constitutionally ban same-sex marriage.

He said voters deserved a chance to accept or reject a 2003 decision by the state's high court that granted gay and lesbian couples marriage rights. Massachusetts is the only state in the nation where gay couples can legally marry.

Puppolo won the seat but soon after he took office, hundreds of constituents asked him to reconsider his take on the proposed ban.

"In the end," Puppolo said, "after listening to the effects that this amendment could have on certain families forever, I felt that it would not be right to amend the state constitution to take away civil rights and to take action against friends and neighbors who are enjoying the benefits of marriage."

Puppolo was among the 151 state legislators who voted June 14 to kill the amendment. The measure needed 50 votes to advance to the 2008 ballot. It got 45. Nine legislators switched their votes to "no" from their previous "yes" votes in January.

The petition that was submitted to state officials in 2005 only forced lawmakers to consider the proposed amendment. It still needed the support of 25 percent of the legislature in two successive sessions to appear on the November 2008 ballot.

Lawmakers approved the measure last session and referendum supporters sought to secure their victory this session. But the activists fell five votes short of their goal.

Any future petitions to repeal allowing gays to marry in Massachusetts could reach statewide ballot no sooner than 2012.

"And as we have seen in the last three years, many Massachusetts residents have grown accustomed to same-sex marriage, even those who once had reservations," said Rep. Frank Israel Smizik (D). "Therefore, I believe as the days go by and same-sex marriage becomes more commonplace, we will hear less and less debate over it."

Rep. Alice Wolf (D) said any delays in revisiting the issue only help efforts to maintain marriage equality in Massachusetts. "Time is on our side," she said. "Young people, gay and straight, view this issue as done and no big deal."

None of the 45 legislators who supported the amendment responded to interview requests this week.

Choosing not to give their last names, **Jessica** (left) and **Kate**, both from Cambridge, Mass., embrace after Massachusetts lawmakers voted to kill a proposed a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage at the Statehouse in Boston on June 14. The couple now plan to marry. (Photo by Stephan Savoia/AP)

—Joshua Lynsen

Gay mayoral candidate loses race in Dallas

DALLAS — Voters in Dallas have selected a wealthy businessman over an openly gay city council member to be their next mayor. Tom Leppert won in a runoff election last week by a large margin. He received about 58 percent of the vote in the final but still unofficial results. Leppert defeated Ed Oakley by more than 13,000 votes. The 53-year-old Leppert says he understands the trust and confidence voters placed in him. Leppert, the former CEO of construction giant Turner Corporation, had never run for elected office before. The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, which backed Oakley, praised his efforts even though he lost. "That an openly gay man was a serious contender to become mayor of one of the largest cities in America is a testament to the fair-mindedness of this country, and a wake-up call for the political establishment," said Chuck Wolfe, president of the Victory Fund.

Ed Oakley (right) 'never ran away from the truth about his sexual orientation,' according to the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund.

RELIGION

Episcopal council rejects key demand from overseas Anglicans

NEW YORK (AP) — A key Episcopal panel defied conservatives last week, saying that Episcopal leaders should not cede authority to overseas Anglicans who want the church to halt its march toward full acceptance of gays. The Episcopal Executive Council said that Anglican leaders, called primates, cannot make decisions for the American denomination, which is the Anglican body in the United States. In February, Anglican leaders demanded that Episcopalians allow a panel — that would include Anglican conservatives from other countries — to oversee conservative Episcopal parishes in the U.S. Episcopalians also were given until Sept. 30 to unequivocally pledge not to consecrate another openly gay bishop or authorize official prayers for same-sex couples. The Executive Council did not speak directly to the other demands in its statement June 14, but said it has struggled "to embrace people who have historically been marginalized." A split would be a financial hardship for the communion. The small but wealthy Episcopal Church provides a significant chunk of the communion's budget. Even with a schism, Episcopal leaders say they are committed to maintaining their missions work with overseas Anglicans.

CONGRESS

Maloney bill would add gays to Family & Medical Leave Act

WASHINGTON — Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.) this week introduced the Family & Medical Leave Inclusion Act. The legislation would add couples in domestic partnerships, civil unions and same-sex marriages to the 1993 Family & Medical Leave Act. "The Family & Medical Leave Act is an extraordinarily successful measure that allows families to provide much-needed care to loved ones. Current law unfairly penalizes same-sex couples who also seek to care for family members," Maloney said in a statement. Maloney introduced the measure with bipartisan backing, including original co-sponsors Reps. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.), Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) and Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.). Enacted in 1993, the historic Family & Medical Leave Act protects workers from employer sanctions if they need time off from work to care for a sick spouse, parent or child. Maloney's amendment would expand the protections in the original law to domestic partners and others, including grandparents, siblings and in-laws.

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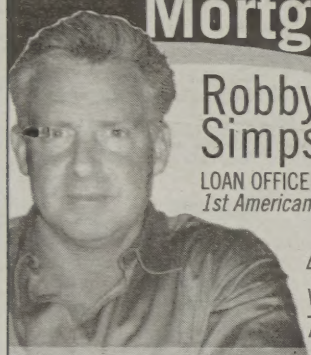

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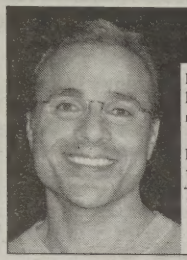

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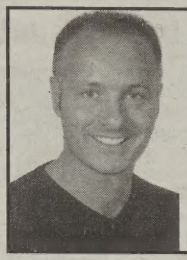

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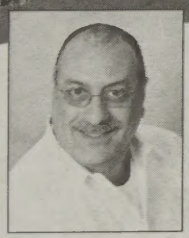

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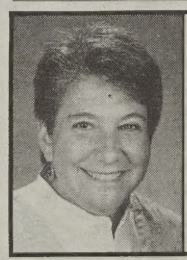

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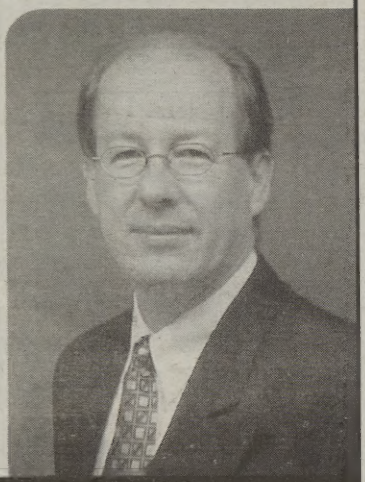

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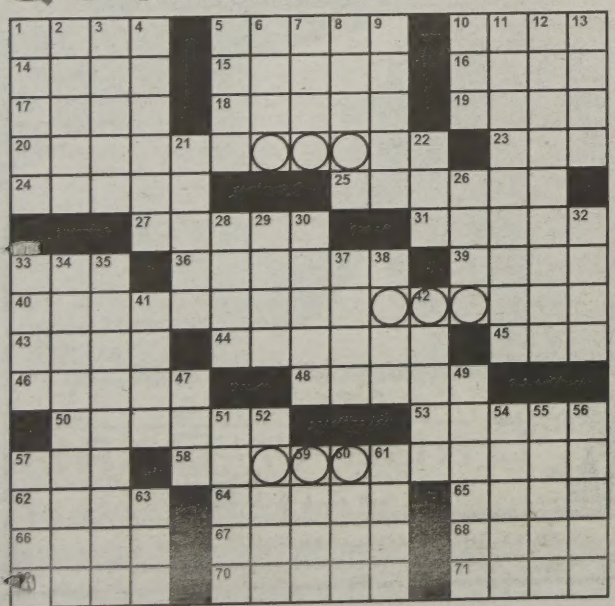

ACROSS

1 Type of father Robert Reed played
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15 Dangerous emission for Tin Man
16 Baudelaire's liver
17 They're good for tricks
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70 Comes across as
71 Put in stitches, Suzanne Westenhoefer

DOWN

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13 Votes for, for Frank
21 Like bell-bottom jeans
22 Robertson, who accused lesbians of witchcraft
26 Do a Daffy Duck impression
28 Where boxers are visible
29 Theocritus creation
30 Presidential candidate of the '90s
32 Singer on "Lord of the Rings" soundtrack
33 Where truckers park their bottoms
34 Rita Mae Brown's cat
35 Bewitched, perhaps
37 Internally pink
38 Word with top, for Mauresmo
41 Enjoy phone sex
42 Cicero's father
47 Went to bed with
49 Log Cabin and Stonewall candidate lists
51 They come during finals week
52 Silas Marner's charge
54 Darn extension
55 Tone of many photos of Stein
56 "A Room of One's Own," e.g.
57 Ready to get drilled by the dentist
59 Guitarist Townshend
60 Pick up stealthily
61 Makes hot
63 "A Chorus Line" song

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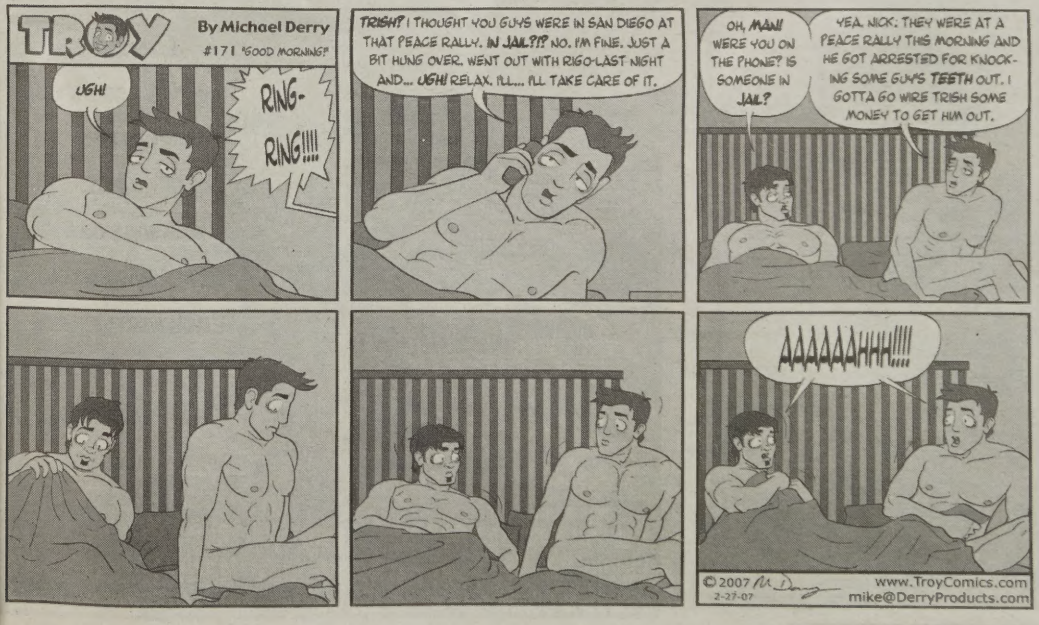
TROY
By Michael Derry
#171 'GOOD MORNING!'
UGH!
RING-RING!!!!
TRISH? I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WERE IN SAN DIEGO AT THAT PEACE RALLY. IN JAIL?!? NO. I'M FINE. JUST A BIT HUNG OVER. WENT OUT WITH RIGO-LAST NIGHT AND... UGH! RELAX. I'LL... I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
OH, MAN! WERE YOU ON THE PHONE? IS SOMEONE IN JAIL?
YEA. NICK. THEY WERE AT A PEACE RALLY THIS MORNING AND HE GOT ARRESTED FOR KNOCKING SOME GUY'S TEETH OUT. I GOTTA GO WIRE TRISH SOME MONEY TO GET HIM OUT.
AAAAAAHHH!!!!
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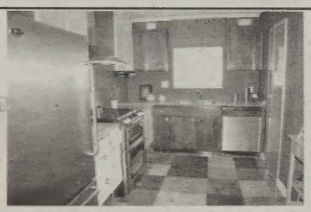

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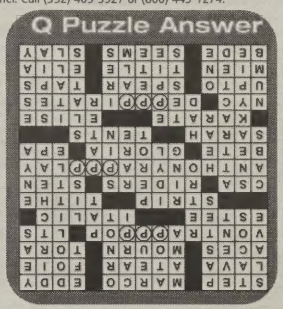

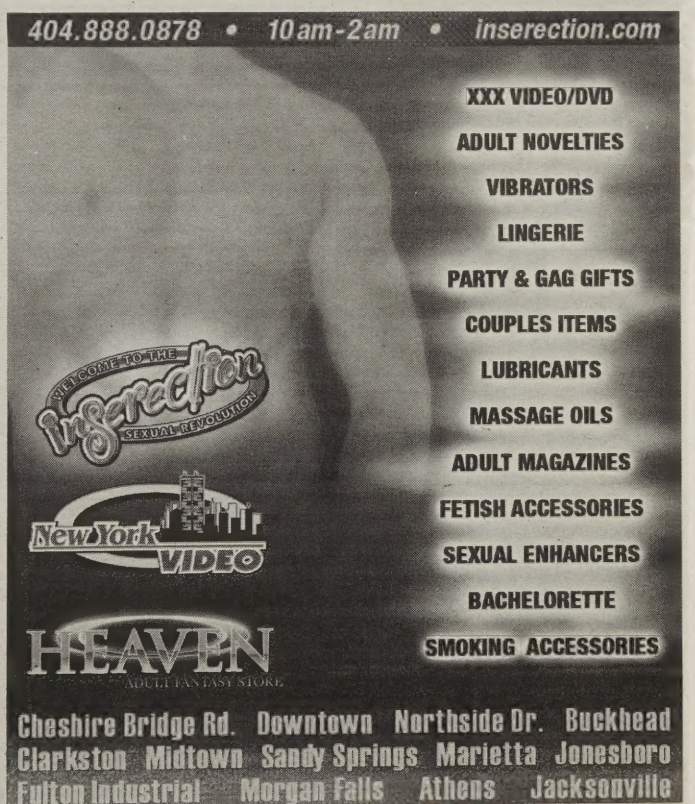

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PRIDE 2007

June 22, 2007

Cover Illustration: Bo Shell

I'm so glad to have been able to see it—the super highs and the super lows. It's been an incredible trip, and I wouldn't change it for the world."

Rentas describes lesbian life in those early days as something less than liberating.

"Now we go around with stickers on our cars announcing we're gay," she says. "That was the last thing you did in the 50s."

And it was a difficult time, as well. "We knew when we came out of the bar we were going into a paddywagon," she explains. "Unless the cops were paid off."

And what about that butch-femme stuff? Rentas said that she was "kiki"—"that makes me want a little bit of everything"—but she explains at least some of the stereotypical lesbian roles as a "safety measure."

"[Lesbian] drag came out of trying to look like a man so you wouldn't get beat up," she says. "If you were walking down the street with a young woman, you were going to get beat up. It was a disguise. And when it became OK to be gay, most of the women came out of the drag."

While it was never easy being a lesbian during those difficult times, Rentas had other battles to fight. She was born in Puerto Rico, came to New York with her family at age 2.

"I think I was born an activist," she explains. "My father is white, my mother is black. I learned early in life about being interracial—but I'm not. Both of my parents are Puerto Rican. When you're a minority, there's always something you're defending."

"When I came to this country, I spoke English before my father did," she continues.

At 18, she fell in love with a woman who would be her partner for the next 20 years, through the 1960s and 1970s—when Rentas was a member of the Salsa Soul Sisters, an organization of African- and Latin-American women—and then into the 1980s—and the beginning of the onslaught of AIDS.

"Our friends were dying and we didn't know what for," she says, "Then all of a sudden it had a name."

And now, in the 1990s, Rentas has moved south.

"I came for a visit, was here three days and fell in love with the city," she says. "I went home and packed. The gardens, flowers everywhere. Friendly people. I like it here. I'm staying."

She's certainly made a mark here—a founder of Latinos en Acción (she's the president of the organization), board member of the Lambda Center, member of Fourth Tuesday and Lesbians Over 50. And she's delighted with all that she's seen and done.

"We have gone through so much in each 10 year period," she says. "Of course, there are still a lot of battles to win, but we've been successful because people have come out of the closet."

"I feel younger now than I did at 18 because I don't have all those complexes that you have when you're younger," she continues. "I have an ability to accept who I am, be who I am. I've stopped looking for people to validate who I am."

"It takes a long time to do that," she adds with a laugh, "so now I'm enjoying."

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OUTLINES

AIDA RENTAS

Age: 56

How long in Atlanta: 2 years

Relationship Status: Dating

Last Book Read: "Just as I am" by E. Lynn Harris

Pet Peeve: People who say they're bored

Pardon the cliche, but Aida Rentas has seen it all and loved every minute of it.

She came out four decades ago as a teenager in New York City, where she lived until moving to Atlanta two years ago.

"I feel privileged to have witnessed all the changes over the last 40 years of the lesbian dream," she says.

The history she has lived comes pouring out in her Poncey-Highland home, not far from Little Five Points.

"I was a hippie in the 60s, and when the community started coming out, I was there," she says. "When Stonewall happened, we were looking at it as just another run-in with the cops, but this time we stood up. Who knew? I'm so glad to have been able to see it—the super highs and the super lows. It's been an incredible trip, and I wouldn't change it for the world."

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"When I came to this country, I spoke English before my father did," she continues. "And my mother took years to learn. I would be speaking it for her and taking her places. Of course, I used it to my advantage in school—'A' is awful and 'D' is delightful."

So just how did a nice Puerto Rican girl end up being a long time lesbian?

"My mother didn't know what to do with me," Rentas laughs. "So she sent me to a correctional institute at nine—a Catholic home for wayward children. I went in boy crazy and came out a lesbian. The nuns were dykes."

At 15, Rentas moved out of her home.

"I had to move to start afresh," she explains. "So I left home and moved to a gay black community in Harlem. They adopted me and taught me how to be a lesbian."

At 18, she fell in love with a woman who would be her partner for the next 20 years, through the 1960s and 1970s—when Rentas was a member of the Salsa Soul Sisters, an organization of African- and Latin-American women—and then into the 1980s—and the beginning of the onslaught of AIDS.

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New Order—1544 Piedmont. 874-8247
Opus—1086 Alco St. 634-6478
The Otherside—1924 Piedmont Rd. 875-5238
The Pear Garden—11 Luckie St. 659-4055
Phoenix—567 Ponce De Leon. 892-7871
Revolution—293 Pharr Rd. 816-5455
Scandals—Ansley Square. 875-5957
Visions—2043 Cheshire Bridge. 248-9712

Direct Action/Political

ACLU of Georgia—523-5398
ACLU/Lesbian &Gay Chapter—523-6201
ACT UP—44 12th St. NE, Atlanta 30309-3979, 874-6782 (O)
Atlanta Greens, Green Party USA, Lesbian-Gay-Bi-Queer Caucus —368-7137
Catalyst—(404) 776-1478
Cobb Citizens Coalition—POB 965336, Marietta 30066, 256-8690
Dykes & Faggots Bash Back—POB 14531, Atl 30324, voice mail 908-5369
Gay/Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation—605-7477
Georgia Advocates for Battered Women & Children/Lesbian Task Force—524-3847; 250 Georgia Ave. SE, Rm. 365, Atl. 30312
Georgia Committee for the 1993 March on Washington —(404) 662-4199 or POB 5282, Atlanta 30307
GAPAC–Georgia Political Action Committee—872-8095, FAX 874-8628
Human Rights Campaign Fund—Field Committee, 231-5751
LEGAL—605-7476
National Association of People with AIDS Hotline—874-7926
National Org. for Women, Gay & Lesbian Rights Task Force—636-7435
Neighbors Network—257-5550
Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition—POB 77341 Atlanta, GA 30357-1341—798-7822
Out Front—PO Box 12369, Atlanta 30355
Queer Nation—605-7396
Republicans for Individual Freedoms—PO 13162, Atl, GA 30324, 239-1679
Straight But Not Narrow—242-2256 (voice mail)
STOP Bias Crimes Hot Line—605-STOP

National

Human Rights Campaign Fund—1012 14th St. NW, Suite 607, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 628-4160
Lambda Legal Defense Fund—666 Broadway, 12th floor, New York, NY 10012, (212) 995-8585
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force—1517 U. Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 332-6483
Old Lesbians Organizing for Change—OLOC, PO Box 980422, Houston, TX 77098
Stonewall 25/Internat'l March—662-6753

Professional

Atlanta Entrepreneurs' Club—Dr. Bravy 457-6347
Bar Owner's Assn—POB 15114, Atlanta 30333-0114
Fourth Tuesday—662-4353
Gay/Lesbian Postal Employees Network (G/L PEN)—POB 580397, Minneapolis, MN 55458-0397
GA Assoc. of Physicians for Human Rights (GAPHR)— 231-2251
LEAGUE ATLANTA, Inc. (Employees of AT&T)—404/351-8322
Nat'l Gay Pilots Assoc.—PO Box 27542, Washington, D.C. 20038-7542, (703) 660-3852
Nat'l Lesbian and Gay Journalists Assoc.—634-7429
Nat'l Federation of Career Women—(404) 659-0315
OUTstaff (Emory)—727-2787 (Donna)
Voices Out Front—2103 N. Decatur Rd. Ste. 185, Decatur 30033
Young Women's Brunch Network—Carolyn, 294-4233.

Spiritual

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church —622-1154
Atlanta Church of Religious Science—636-4567
Catholic Gay and Lesbian Outreach—876-0631
Christ Covenant MCC, Stone Mountain—297-0350
Congregation Bet Haverim (Jewish)—642-3467
Emergence/Atlanta (Christian Scientists)—565-2126
First Existentialist Congregation of Atanta—378-5570
First Metropolitan Community Church of Atl—325-4143
Friends for Lesbian & Gay Concerns (Quakers)—370-1340
Gay & Lesbian Mormons—570-2561 (dig. page)
Gay Spirit Visions—292-8567
Grant Park Aldersgate United Methodist Church—627-6221; 575 Boulevard SE
Hosanna African Unity Life Center—872-9055
Integrity (Episcopal)—642-3183
Lutherans Concerned/Atlanta—636-7109
New Age Gays—434-7338
Oakhurst Presbyterian Church—378-6284
Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns—373-5830
Unitarian Universalists—634-5134, George at 688-2242

Sports/Outdoor/Hobbies

Atlanta Team Tennis Assn—621-2699
Atlanta Venture Sports—242-4899
Atlanta Women's Lacrosse Club—303-1160, 888-6738
Atlanta Women's Social Tennis—662-GAME
Front Runners/Atlanta—621-5007
Greater Atlanta Naturist Group—851-2882 (voice mail)
Hotlanta Soccer—876-7372
Hotlanta Softball League—POB 14582, Atl. 30324, 873-4061
Hotlanta Volleyball—621-5062
Lambda Car Club—POB 11705, Atlanta 30355
Luring Lesbians (fishing club)—932-5236
Mountain Catalyst—POB 199, Demorest, GA 30535
OUT in Nature—619-9185
S.E. Gay Rodeo Assn—POB 7881, Atl., 30357. 760-8126
Wilderness Network of GA—SASE, POB 55156, Atlanta 30308
Women's Outdoor Network—624-3418
Women's Rugby—659-6916 or 761-8939
TRICKS Bridge Club— 2980 Cobb Pkwy, Suite 192-172, Atlanta 30339
Underwater Escapes—289-0696

Service/Support/Social

About Crossdressing—Janet, 624-3770
African American Lesbian/Gay Alliance—239-8184 (voice mail)
Amazon Salon Young Feminist Network—223-3718
American Educational Gender Info Service —POB 33724, Decatur 30033. (404) 939-0244 (eve)
Asians & Friends-Atlanta—876-0090
Athens Lesbian Information—LSG, POB 7864, Athens, 30604
Atlanta Corporal Punishment Club—Box 11863, Atlanta 30355
Atlanta Couples Together—365-2455
Atlanta Gay Center—876-5372
Atlanta Gender Exploration—875-9846
Atlanta Lambda Community Ctr—POB 15180, Atl 30333. 662-9010
Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Comm—662-4533
Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance—POB 5502, Atl 30307. 378-9769
Atlanta Lesbian Singles Organization (ALSO)—294-4558
Atlanta Prime Timers—APT, POB 29487, Atlanta 30359
Atlanta Pro-Choice Action Committee—239-8016
BiAtlanta—256-8992
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Black and White Men Together—892-BWMT
Caregivers to PWAs Support Group—874-1109 or 875-6109
Codependents Anonymous—239-1657
Consciousness Raising and Support Group for Women in Politics and Grassroots Organizing—636-7435
Delphi—POB 14591, Atlanta, G 30324
Emergence International—876-3997
Emotions Anonymous—925-4825
First Women—G.G. Richardson, POB 724711, Atl. 30339, 612-9473.
Friends Atlanta—662-4501
Gainsville/NE Georgia Gay Men's Support Grp—Gary 404-535-5445
Gay Fathers of Atlanta—342-6451
Gay Help Line—6pm-11pm 892-0661
Gay/Lesbian AA & Al-Anon—881-9188
Gay/Lesbian/Bi Teen Group—378-5570
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America—623-4099
Gay/Lesbian Task Force to the Public Safety Comm. of City Council —330-6504
Georgia Girth & Mirth—POB 9678, Atl. 30319. (404) 621-5710
Georgia Lesbian Ecofeminists—525-9085
Gwinnett Lambda—POB 464848, Lwrnc'ville 30246, 871-GAYS
Hospitality Atlanta—627-1630, 708-6866
Interact of Atlanta—984-9875
John Howell Park Project—876-0105
Lambda Group/Narcotics Anonymous—237-6262
Latinos En Acción—621-5743
Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous—378-6935
Lesbian Narcotics Anonymous—703-3897
Lesbian Support Group—627-7387
Lesbians Considering Parenthood—767-6173
Lesbians Over 50— 908-6119
Lesbians With Children—740-1729
Men of Little 5 Points—POB 5425, Atlanta 31107, 523-5804
Name the Violence Support Group for Battered Lesbians —822-9570; Crisis Hotline—688-9436
Overeaters Anonymous (gay/lesbian group)—892-5868
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays—296-0830 or 875-9440
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays/Chattanooga—(615) 875-5750, (615) 622-3813
Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—298-9614
Prime Timers—633-3955
Queer Youth—P.O. Box 54032, Atlanta 30308; 605-7396
Real Gay World BBS—404-266-0856
Sexual Compulsives Anonymous—239-8048
Support Group for Battered Gay Partners—(404) 350-0456
Survivors of Incest Anonymous—POB 2502, Decatur, GA 30031; 239-8018
Tyikone, Atlanta—607-1766
Uniformed Svcs Activity—Box 6057, Arlington, VA 22206
Women In Kahoots—(WINK) 438-1421
Women of Wisdom—289-8819
Wordsmith Society—Chris at 498-0137
Young Adult Support Group—876-5372
Zami—370-1392

Students/Alumni

Agnes Scott Lesbian & Bisexual Alliance—Box 501, Decatur 30030; 373-1632
Alliance of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students of GA State—605-7681
Bi, Lesbian & Gay Student Union of West Ga. College—706-834-3569
Delta Lambda Phi—All Campuses, 365-5357
Emory Lesbian & Gay Organization—727-6692
Gays & Lesbians United for Equality—Kennesaw Comm. College 423-6246
Georgia Tech Gay Alumni Group—POB 50291, GA Tech Sta., Atl 30332
Georgia Tech Gay & Lesbian Alliance—497-0684
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Student Union of the Univ. of Ga.—404/549-9368
S.E. Alternative Lifestyles Association—248-9307
Univ. of Ala. Lesbian/Gay Alumni Assoc.—284-3479

THEATER

RAIN

It's far too easy to resort to puns when reviewing a play such as "Rain," the current offering at Theatre in the Square in Marietta. You can say things like, "It's soggy," or "It's all wet" and think you're being funny. But you're not.

The problem is that "Rain" simply lacks the torrid impact it once had. Then again, look at the movies with Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth or Gloria Swanson. By today's standards, "Rain" is less about steamy, forbidden love on a storm-drenched South Sea Island than it is about religious hypocrisy and fundamentalist preachers who use the Bible as a weapon. Seen in that light, "Rain" has relevance today, especially to the situation in Cobb County (Ironically, the theater chose "Rain" for its season long before the controversy broke last summer, and nobody noticed that Somerset Maugham, whose short story "Miss Sadie Thompson" is the basis for "Rain," was one of the most famous, openly gay writers of the 20th Century).

"Rain" is the story of a group of travelers in the South Seas who find themselves stuck on a small island in the middle of monsoon season. Forced to camp out in the lodgings of Joe Horn (John Purcell), a crusty old drunken general store proprietor, the group almost immediately turns its attentions to the wild ways of one of its fellow travelers, Miss Sadie Thompson (Ruth Reid). Sadie is a woman with a past, and Rev. Alfred Davidson (Bruce Evers) is hell-bent to do his damnedest to see she comes clean and finds religion.

But Davidson is a hypocrite. He's condemned himself and his wife Hester into a loveless, chaste marriage (they've *never* had sex, we learn). And just at the moment when he thinks he has saved Sadie's soul, he gives in to his own desires with her.

KATHRYN KOLB

"Rain," the newest offering from Theatre in the Square, takes aim at religious hypocrisy.

In its day (it opened on Broadway in 1922, adapted by John Colton and Clemence Randolph), "Rain" was considered racy theater—the sort of play that would be banned in Boston (its London opening was heavily censored). Today, we scratch our heads and wonder why. Because Davidson slept with Sadie? Because Sadie was a prostitute? Because Maugham used his story to denounce religious hypocrisy and those who promulgate it? It's hard to judge.

Upon seeing the Theatre in the Square production, my initial impulse was to dismiss the piece as being far too dated to be enjoyable. But "Rain" kept gnawing at me, forcing me to look back at it and reexamine what Maugham was trying to say. Yes, it's a dated piece, too out of historical context to be believed. But like Moliere's "Tartuffe," there's a far stronger message here. Those people who use religion as a weapon—like Davidson, like the Cobb County Commission, like those pastors who use their positions in a church to seduce vulnerable parishioners—will ultimately get their just desserts. Even Davidson, the self-righteous prig that he is, gets what he deserves (though it seems a little heavy-handed to a contemporary audience).

John R. Briggs' staging of "Rain" is problematic. He has directed the play with a heavy hand, underlining all those spots in the script where we're supposed to see how loathsome and vile a creature Davidson really is. Conversely, he's lightened up the character of Sadie so much, as played by Reid, that she seems more flapper than floozy, less of a threat to Davidson's need to dominate than a minor irritant to his vision of the world. Furthermore, Briggs has mistakenly substituted slow pacing for the lethargic atmosphere called for in the script. Often the production sags when it should be brisk and tight. It lopes to its hellfire denouncement instead of galloping.

Bruce Evers does indeed bring a great deal of fire and brimstone to the character of Davidson, making him so easy to loathe. He is the personification of a priggish pastor, and his portrayal is strong. Jessica Phelps is startling as Mrs. Davidson, a woman who turns "long-suffering" into an art form. Purposely underplaying the role, Phelps delivers the most powerful punch of the production in many ways.

One supporting character, Dr. MacPhail, as played by Jack Mason, is the voice of reason in the stormy center of the play. Mason is large and loud and gruff, but he brings the most insight to his role, and he's a commanding presence whenever he's on stage. He, more than anyone else in the cast, understands the pacing the piece requires, and he alone gets the humor written into the piece.

It might be easy to dismiss "Rain" as dated material, but would be inappropriate to do so. Religious hypocrisy as the basis of theater has been with us for centuries (the aforementioned "Tartuffe"). True, "Rain" is very much rooted in a 1920 sensibility, but its message—and the venue in which it is delivered—impacts us even now.

MICHAEL KAPE

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OUTLINES

AIDA RENTAS

Age: 56

How long in Atlanta: 2 years

Relationship Status: Dating

Last Book Read: "Just as I am" by E. Lynn Harris

Pet Peeve: People who say they're bored

Pardon the cliche, but Aida Rentas has seen it all and loved every minute of it.

She came out four decades ago as a teenager in New York City, where she lived until moving to Atlanta two years ago.

"I feel privileged to have witnessed all the changes over the last 40 years of the lesbian dream," she says.

The history she has lived comes pouring out in her Poncey-Highland home, not far from Little Five Points.

"I was a hippie in the 60s, and when the community started coming out, I was there," she says. "When Stonewall happened, we were looking at it as just another run-in with the cops, but this time we stood up. Who knew?

"And my mother took years to learn. I would be speaking it for her and taking her places. Of course, I used it to my advantage in school—'A' is awful and 'D' is delightful."

So just how did a nice Puerto Rican girl end up being a long time lesbian?

"My mother didn't know what to do with me," Rentas laughs. "So she sent me to a correctional institute at nine—a Catholic home for wayward children. I went in boy crazy and came out a lesbian. The nuns were dykes."

At 15, Rentas moved out of her home.

"I had to move to start afresh," she explains. "So I left home and moved to a gay black community in Harlem. They adopted me and taught me how to be a lesbian."

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The weekend commenced with the Candlelight Vigil held at the Studioplex on Auburn Avenue. As the traditional opening event, the vigil commemorates those who lost their lives to HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, violence, and other physical and emotional health challenges. Scores of attendants gathered to hear spoken word and song and prayer as they honored the departed who have touched their lives.

"So much of the weekend is about a party," said ITLA Picnic coordinator Lynn Duhart. "Its important for us to remember that the AIDS epidemic is still a problem not only among gays but the whole African American community."

State Senator Vincent Fort, an outspoken ally of gays throughout Georgia, challenged attendees at the opening ceremony to become more involved and visible.

"You have a place inside and outside the gates to be an engine for change," he said

Atlanta Executive Network (AEN) joined ITLA to present a community luncheon and panel

"I've been coming here since before the march and it just keeps getting bigger and bigger," City Council President Cathy Woolard observed. The march commenced at the Mall West Endl parking lot and culminated at West End Park.

Among prominent leaders who marched were State Senator Vincent Fort, Woolard, Commissioner Nancy Boxill, and City Councilperson H. Lamar Willis. When asked why

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Suite B12
(Kroger Shopping Center)
770.814.2907

Southlake
6457 Tara Boulevard
(Office Depot
Shopping Center)
770.603.2211

South DeKalb
2801 Candler Road,
Suite 1
(Mall Parking Lot)
404.241.3038

Northlake
4030 La Vista Road
(Across from Northlake
Mall next to Michael's)
678.937.1980

Sandy Springs
5841 Roswell Road
(1 Block North of I-285
next to Three Dollar Cafe)
404.252.6071

Buckhead
3330 Piedmont Road,
Suite 230
(Kroger Shopping Center)
404.816.6646

Roswell
10664 Alpharetta Hwy.
Ste 100, (1 Block North of
Holcomb Bridge Road)
770.998.2750

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Making death a part of life

"Starting Monday," the new production at Onstage Atlanta, looks at the relationship between two women faced with the ultimate test

by MICHAEL KAPE

"The truth be told, I have sex with men. No love. I have love with women. No sex. I don't think there's a name for me yet," says the leading character of Lynne in the play "Starting Monday," which opens this week at Onstage Atlanta.

Starting Monday
opens Friday, March 25 at Onstage Atlanta, 420 Courtland St. Downtown. For more information, call 897-1802.

What she does have is a very good friend in Ellis. Unfortunately, Ellis is dying of cancer.

"Starting Monday" by Anne Commire, is a play about the friendship between these two women, which follows what happens to them from the time they meet on a cruise until after Ellis dies. Told in flashback, the piece uses both humor and pathos to give us insight into a painful subject.

"People are going to learn a little about the process of death, if they have not already been through it with someone," says Marc Gowan, Onstage's artistic director, who is directing this production. "The play is entertaining. It's an emotional roller coaster. You laugh. You cry. You go woooo."

Gowan is very clear about the true nature of the friendship between Lynne and Ellis. "The two women meet," he says, "and they become friends. Deep friends. Very close friends. But it's not a sexual relationship. The one thing some of the reviews—especially the Village Voice review—of the original New York production said was that Commire was sanitizing the play for mass appeal, that there really was more to this relationship than we see in this relationship than we see in the play. I talked to the playwright, and she said, 'That's bullshit. People can be friends without having a sexual relationship.'"

The two women certainly do have a lot in common. As Lynne tells the audience, "We used to wake up with a hangover, a man over, and early morning regrets." It is when they realize just how much they do have in common (men trouble, obsession

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Elayne Leathers-Hill (far left) of Prestige Embroidery was named the outstanding woman achiever of the year by the Atlanta Business League at their 19th annual Super Tuesday awards luncheon Sept 9. Finalists in the category were (from left) Glenda Black of Good News Magazine and Carrie Harris of D&E Consulting and Training Group. The awards were presented by Super Tuesday chair Linda Odom (far right).

Black women entrepreneurs lauded at Super Tuesday Luncheon

By Hal Lamar

Women who distinguish themselves in business as well as those working for self were applauded by more than 800 people attending the Atlanta Business League's 19th annual Super Tuesday luncheon, Sept. 9.

Annually, the ABL, The Atlanta chapter to the National Business League founded over 100 years ago by educator Booker T. Washington, honors black female business owners and professionals in a plethora of categories.

Those who attended the festivities Tuesday rubbed shoulders with home -based business owners, those who succeeded as entrepreneurs despite the odds, non-traditional business owners and last but not least, an outstanding achiever for 2003.

The latter was Elayne Leathers Hill, founder of Prestige Embroidery which started with one machine and has since grown to a $7 million a year business. Other finalists in the category were Carrie Harris, owner of D&E Consulting and Training Group and Glenda Black, publisher of Good News magazine.

In the non-traditional category, the overall winner was Mary Parker, owner of All-in-One Security, the only woman-owned security firm specializing in special events in the United States. Parker, who is known in the business as "the security lady" is also an ordained minister of the gospel. Finalists in the category included chiropractor Shoanmarie Seals and Mildred Skipworth-Drayton of Community Nursing Services Inc.

The overall winner in the "Success Against the Odds" category was Sophie Gibson of Sojo Inc., a full-service technology marketing and communications firm. Other finalists in the category were creative hat designer Illona Cardona and Evelyn Tucker, who overcame illness to create a catering service called "Sister Nina's Kitchen."

Rene Miller, who is seen almost nightly during the lottery drawings on WSB-TV, won the Creative Style category with Omega Media, Inc, a PR and events planning company. Other finalists in the category included Elon Osby of Annointed Pedals (the flower worn on the lapel of Mayor Shirley Franklin is her creation), and Deirdre Wilson, owner of Renaissance School of Music.

The winner in the home-based business category was Alysin Foster, owner of

See "Black women entrepreneurs" on page 5

Could DeKalb get its first black DA?

By Hal Lamar

Keith Adams is dead serious about becoming District Attorney for DeKalb County, so much so, he made the announcement back in March for a race which will not hold primaries until July of 2004. If successful, he would also become the first African-American to hold the position and one of only two known black DAs in the state, the other being Fulton's Paul Howard.

But since Adams took the political plunge officially May 19, several things have transpired which could make the race for the top legal seat in the state's 2nd biggest county very interesting.

First, DeKalb Solicitor Gwendolyn Keyes announced on August 5 she will also be a candidate for the post. In 1999, she nudged out Adams in a run-off race for solicitor. Then in July of this year, J. Tom Morgan, DeKalb's DA since 1992, announced he would not seek another term.

"That does change the dynamics," said Adams in a recent interview with the Atlanta Voice. "We were geared up to run against a popular incumbent." Adams says he started early believing he lost the 1998 race for solicitor because Keyes got a six-month head start on him.

Now in private practice as a defense attorney, Adams spent five years as an assistant DA, enough time and experience to conclude that there needs to be some changes in the office.

He suggested to the VOICE that one of the areas he intends to look closely at, if elected next November, will be juvenile justice. "We need to keep the county safe for all citizens, but I am bothered by so many 13 year-olds being sent to prison. We have got to find a way to touch those kids before it ever gets to the judicial system."

Adams also thinks the DA's office needs to be more diverse.

"We have no Hispanic attorneys and few blacks. The county is 50 percent minority and our office needs to reflect those figures. It's just the right thing to do."

Keyes was 29 years-old when she became DeKalb's first black solicitor in 1998. She replaced Ralph Bowden, who decided to retire after 16 years in the office. He was re-elected to the post last year with no opposition.

In an interview August 7th with DeKalb's Community Review newspaper, Keyes indicated that she was propelled to seek the office after Morgan announced he would not seek another term. Her campaign manager is Pamela Holmes, known for steering the successful race of Vernon Jones as DeKalb's first black CEO.

Thousands celebrate Atlanta Black Gay Pride weekend

By Craig Washington
Special to The Atlanta Voice

Thousands of black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people flocked to the "city too busy to hate" this past Labor Day weekend to celebrate Atlanta Black Gay Pride.

Proclaimed as the official organizers of Atlanta Black Gay Pride by former Mayor Bill Campbell, In The Life Atlanta has convened this annual event since 1996. The Sheraton Colony Square Hotel in Midtown served as this year's official host and was filled to capacity.

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Black Gay Pride March: Unity Fellowship Church Atlanta members are ready to "Stand Up and Represent"

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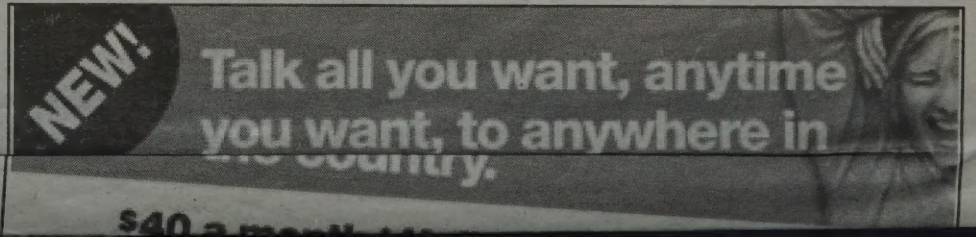

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Coca-Cola Stage

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Please see **MARSHALS** on **Page 40**

Thousands celebrate Atlanta Black Gay Pride weekend

By Craig Washington
Special to The Atlanta Voice

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T he weekend's festivities were capped by the third annual Stand Up and Represent March on Labor Day morning in the historic West End district. ITLA Board Co-Chair Michael Slaughter attributed this year's success to "a major shift in the quality and scale of the event. We had more volunteers that were willing to give extra time to plan and coordinate. There was also an increase in the number of corporate sponsors including Delta and IBM."

Other sponsors included Venus Magazine, Classic Soul 102.5, Rolling Out, Georgia Equality, Outwrite Bookstore, Southern Voice, AID Atlanta, Human Rights Campaign, The Atlanta Voice and Out and Advocate Magazine.

The weekend commenced with the Candlelight Vigil held at the Studioplex on Auburn Avenue. As the traditional opening event, the vigil commemorates those who lost their lives to HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, violence, and other physical and emotional health challenges. Scores of attendants gathered to hear spoken word and song and prayer as they honored the departed who have touched their lives.

"So much of the weekend is about a party," said ITLA Picnic coordinator Lynn Duhart. "Its important for us to remember that the AIDS epidemic is still a problem not only among gays but the whole African American community."

State Senator Vincent Fort, an outspoken ally of gays throughout Georgia, challenged attendees at the opening ceremony to become more involved and visible.

"You have a place inside and outside the gates to be an engine for change," he said

Atlanta Executive Network (AEN) joined ITLA to present a community luncheon and panel discussion on Saturday, August 30. Among the panelists were keynote speaker Trevor Pettiford, a WAGA Fox 5 reporter, Monique Durham - IBM Education Client Representative, former AEN Board President Ronald Moore, Venus Magazine Editor Charlene Cothran, Cindy Abel - bizvox Marketing Communications CEO & President, Allen Thornell - Georgia Equality Executive Director, Jerry Gonzales - Georgia Hispanic Network, President, Robin G. White - Kings Crossing Publishing Co.

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"I've been coming here since before the march and it just keeps getting bigger and bigger," City Council President Cathy Woolard observed. The march commenced at the Mall West Endl parking lot and culminated at West End Park.

Among prominent leaders who marched were State Senator Vincent Fort, Woolard, Commissioner Nancy Boxill, and City Councilperson H. Lamar Willis. When asked why he joined the march, Willis reflected, "I grew up in this city. Many of the individuals that helped my single mother raise me were those who identified with this lifestyle. Its important that we understand that in the African American community, we come in all different hues and sexual orientations and be able to embrace that."

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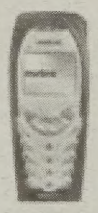

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SOUTHERN VOICE COMMUNITY

MONDAY, JUNE 25

Showtime and PBA air three **gay documentaries:** 'Semper Fi,' about a gay Marine, on Showtime, and 'Why We Sing,' about gay choruses, including the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus, and the latest edition of 'In the Life' on PBA. 'Semper Fi': 8:30 p.m. on Showtime. www.sho.com. 'Sing' and 'Life': 10 p.m. on PBA30. www.pba.org

TUESDAY, JUNE 26

The AGLCC hosts a **Business Builder Lunch.** 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. at Rock Bottom Brewery Buckhead, 3242 Peachtree Road. www.atlanta-gaychamber.org

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'Advancing our cause'

Rentas, Schmeling tapped as Pride grand marshals

By ZACK HUDSON and SHANNON JENKINS

ALONE, THEY EACH STOOD OUT, AND UP, FOR their own rights. Together, they represent the triumphs and struggles of gay men and lesbians in Atlanta and everywhere else. As spectators numbering in the tens of thousands cheer them on, Aida Rentas and Bradley Schmeling will lead thousands more marchers as grand marshals of the 2007 Atlanta Pride parade.

Each year, as the Atlanta Pride Committee begins nailing down the preliminary details of the annual three-day celebration, it calls on community members to nominate parade grand marshals. With exceptions for honorary representatives, Pride parade grand marshals must be openly gay or transgender Georgia residents. For the 2007 parade, the committee boiled down the nominations to one female and one male marshal pick.

"We gauge what these folks have done within the Atlanta and Georgia communities to advance our cause," explains Atlanta Pride Committee Executive Director Donna Narducci.

Aida Rentas, a longtime Atlanta gay rights activist, said she is 'humbled' by being selected as a grand marshal this year.

AIDA RENTAS

As the oldest of seven children growing up in New York City, Aida Rentas began her lifelong journey as an outspoken pioneer and advocate.

She was the first to learn English in her Spanish-speaking household and assumed the role of interpreter for her entire family.

"My mother came from Puerto Rico, and she didn't speak English. My father [a white Puerto Rican] didn't speak English," Rentas recalls. "So I had to defend my brothers and sisters and be the leader, even for my mother and father."

Later in life, as an out lesbian, Rentas stepped up to defend herself and her community.

"It was a crime to go to a gay club," Rentas, 68, says of her early adulthood in New York. "They used to put us in paddy wagons, and if you say who you are, it's hard to have jobs or be a citizen of the community. I thought, 'How unfair is this?'"

Watching her peers live double lives had a profound effect on the young Rentas.

"I'd never been afraid to say I'm bisexual, I'm lesbian, I'm whatever, and people would say, 'You say that like you're proud,'" she says. "I'd say, 'Am I supposed to be ashamed?'"

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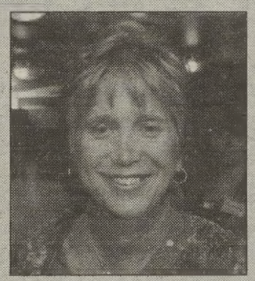

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— Dyana Bagby

Pride marshals humbled by selection to lead parade

Gay pastor **Bradley Schmeling** faces being defrocked by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America because he is in a gay relationship.

MARSHALS, continued from **Page 39**

most vulnerable age — whether you're gay, straight, black or white — is when you're a child. My children learn to be open-minded. They learn all the things that you want people to know so that it can be a better world."

It was Rentas' dedication to making her community — and the world — a better place that won her the role of grand marshal in Atlanta's 2007 Pride Parade.

"It's a wonderful feeling that the community will give you that honor," Rentas says. "It's a humbling thing."

BRADLEY SCHMELING

Bradley Schmeling, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Atlanta, ignited controversy and frank discussion about gay clergy members within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Schmeling came under fire from the ELCA Southeastern Synod when he disclosed his relationship with partner Darin Easler, himself a former ELCA minister.

After Southeastern Synod Bishop Ronald Warren moved to have Schmeling dropped from the ELCA's clergy rolls, a clerical jury ruled earlier this year that current ELCA policy requiring openly gay clergy members to remain celibate is unfair. The jury stayed Schmeling's termination for six months, and encouraged the pastor to work toward changing the denomination's anti-gay relationship policy, thereby saving his job.

"By and large, it has been a gift to me to play an important role in moving the church towards greater inclusivity," Schmeling says of his role as a leader and activist on behalf of gay clergy.

Schmeling came out in 1992, and took the helm of St. John's as an openly gay pastor in 2000. He met Easler at a Minnesota convention of Lutherans Concerned, an activist and evangelical organization for gay Lutherans. After Easler moved to Atlanta to live with Schmeling, keeping their relationship quiet — even under threat of being kicked out of the ELCA — was never even pondered as an option.

"I don't ever expect to make that choice. If God is really calling me to the ministry, there will be doorways and pathways open to me. God would never ask for that," Schmeling says.

Schmeling's plight has made international headlines, and in the process, has drummed up healthy support for his ministry and his new cause.

At the ELCA Southeastern Synod Assembly in June, synod voters nominated and carried Schmeling to the top four of the ballot to replace the outgoing Bishop Warren, who filed charges against Schmeling with the ELCA after learning of his same-sex relationship. As a result of the controversy surrounding Schmeling, at least eight synods from throughout the U.S. have expressed official support of Schmeling's ministry and an ELCA policy change.

"Even with all of this going on and increasingly getting national interest in the church — day by day — we're doing regular ministry at St. John's, so I don't feel as though I'm caught up in this on a daily basis," the pastor says.

The controversy occasionally rears it head at home, Schmeling says, because Easler worries about the toll the struggle will take on Schmeling.

"I definitely think sometimes it's harder for him to watch what is happening to me than what it actually is," Schmeling says.

He can take it in stride, because, controversy aside, he expected his course as an openly gay pastor to be a bumpy one.

"I think when you're out in the church, you never know what's going to happen. I've known since I came out in the church in 1992 that my life would not be like a straight pastor's life," he says.

Regardless the outcome, Schmeling says his struggle will have in no way been in vain.

"In the end, I'm grateful for the opportunity to be able to tell my story, and to have my life and my relationship to help change the church," he says.

MORE INFO:
Aida Rentas &
Bradley Schmeling
Pride Grand Marshals
Saturday, 5:42 p.m.
Coca-Cola Stage

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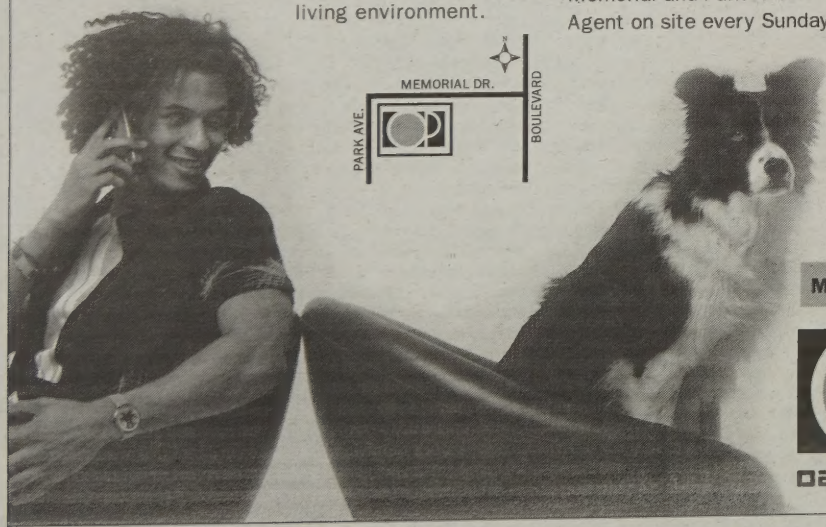

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Cycle sisters

Dykes on Bikes take pride in leading annual gay parade

LEFT: **Lori Buff** (center), founder of Dykes on Bikes 12 years ago, leads off the annual Atlanta Pride each year. RIGHT: Inspired by motorcyclists leading last year's Pride parade, **Mel Banks** came out to her family and plans to ride with the Dykes on Bikes on Sunday.

By DYANA BAGBY
dbagby@sovo.com

Last year, sitting in her red camp chair on the side of Peachtree Street under a slight drizzle waiting for the Atlanta Pride Parade to begin, Mel Banks, wearing a rainbow boa, was still in the closet to her family.

But when the Dykes on Bikes revved their engines and the roar of their motorcycles was matched by the roar of the crowd, Banks, 28, literally felt goose bumps rise on her arms. She shed a few tears and knew she could no longer be ashamed of who she is.

"They were balls to the walls, didn't give a damn," she remembers of the women, men, transgender and transsexual riders rolling their bikes into position to start the annual parade.

"They were all cranking up their cycles at the same time — they were just putting it out there. There was nothing wrong; they weren't ashamed. And I told myself, I want to do that next year," she says.

Making the decision to become a member of the Atlanta chapter of the Dykes on Bikes and ride for the first time in this year's parade meant she was also going to have to come out to her family.

"Within the next two weeks [after last year's parade] I explained to my family what I had known since the third grade," she says.

Banks, an accountant from Canton, Ga., who has been riding motorcycles since she was a little girl, says her family has been generally supportive since she came out. Her sister is expected to watch her ride her 2004 white and silver Suzuki Volusia in her first parade as part of the inspirational Dyke on Bikes on Sunday; Banks hopes her 18-year old cousin, who also came out last year, makes it to his first Pride.

"Watching those women on their bikes — it just really moved me. By participating this year, maybe someone else in the crowd who felt the same way I did will decide to come out," she says. "I'm just really excited. I can already hear the engines."

'ADRENALINE RUSH'

Atlanta's Dykes on Bikes is a loose chapter of motorcycle enthusiasts made up of a "ton of lesbians" but also gay and straight men as well as several trans members, says its founder, Lori Buff, 43, of Decatur.

"I started it 12 years ago with my partner at the time and wanted to be in the parade really because I wanted to show off my new bike, a 1986 Honda Magnum that I just bought and added chrome pieces to," she says.

Dykes on Bikes, part of the national motorcycle club where members lead off Pride parades nationwide, is one of several women motorcycle clubs in Atlanta, including the Chrome Plated Harts, Ebony Angels and Women on Wheels.

The first Dykes on Bikes participation in Atlanta in 1995 garnered 12 riders. Buff remembers the first parade vividly. There were placed in front of a vet's office with a truck painted to look like a Dalmatian and behind a group of marchers. The riders had to wait for the marchers to get far ahead and then speed to catch up. After that, the Pride Committee realized the bikers needed to be at the head of the parade. And there's nothing like leading the parade off, Buff says.

"We get the view of Peachtree Street wide open, waiting for us. It's such an adrenaline rush," she says.

Kat Kelly, 35, has been riding in the parade five years and loves being part of kicking off the parade.

"It's fun to get things riled up, all the bikes revving really gets the crowd pumped up," she says.

Last year, some 40 cyclists participated; Buff is hoping for close to 100 riders this year and says those watching will see a lot of chrome, shine and an undeniable sense of excitement when they start their motors.

"And a lot of noise," she adds with a laugh.

This year Buff will ride with her partner, Janet Carter, on her 1997 Kawasaki Vulcan Classic, wearing as much leather as the heat will allow.

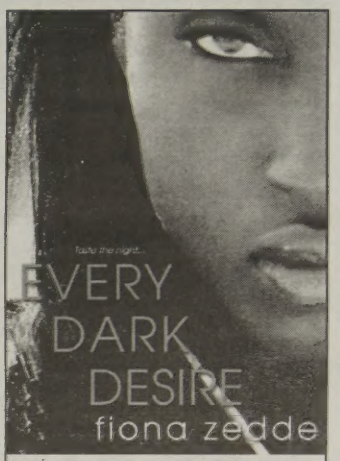
And there will be women along the route who will flash the Dykes on Bikes and Buff, who typically is in the lead, will stop to allow the group to enjoy the views.

"As we get closer to the park, people lose their minds," she says.

While Buff jokes about the cliché of lesbians on motorcycles, she believes Dykes on Bikes is more than that — it's about shedding society's conservative expectations of women and connecting to others like them.

"There's a certain amount of oppression on women and on the gay community all together, so it's nice, important to have something that gives us a sense of freedom," she says.

MORE INFO:
Atlanta Pride Parade
Step off 1 p.m.
Corner of Ralph McGill Boulevard and Peachtree Street
home.earthlink.net/~dykesonbikes/



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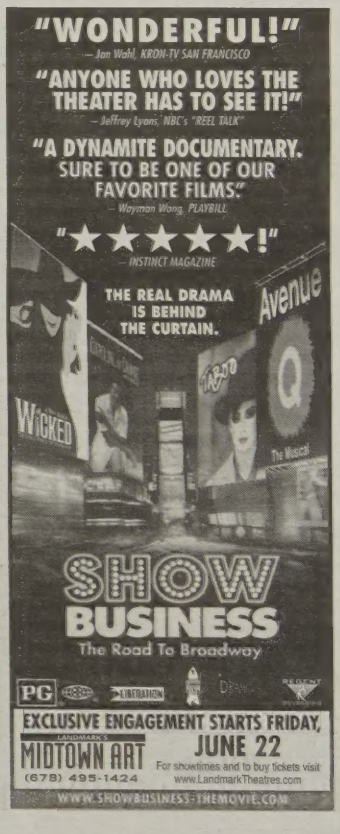
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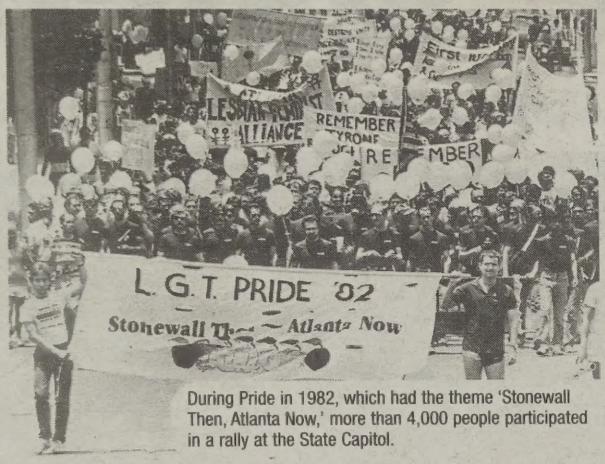
The evolution of Atlanta Pride

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

Thirty-eight years ago, on June 28, 1969, police who went to conduct a routine raid at a New York City gay bar called the Stonewall Inn got a major surprise: A ragtag bunch of drag queens, gay men and lesbians fought back against the police harassment in what became known as the Stonewall Riots.

The significance of the tumultuous three days that followed seemed immediately clear. By the next year, activists in several cities around the country, including Atlanta, held their own marches and rallies to observe the riot's anniversary. These marches became the first Gay Pride celebrations, and the riots that sparked them became known as the beginning of the modern gay rights movement.



During Pride in 1982, which had the theme 'Stonewall Then, Atlanta Now,' more than 4,000 people participated in a rally at the State Capitol.

37 YEARS OF ATLANTA PRIDE

1970

On the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, about 100 activists march down Peachtree Street. The march received no media coverage, and no known records remain, leading some to dispute whether it happened.

1971

Democratic party activist Bill Smith legally incorporates the revolutionary Gay Liberation Front, following the trend of GLF groups springing up around the country. GLF sponsors Atlanta's first official "Gay Liberation Day" ("lesbian" isn't specifically included yet) march down Peachtree Street to Piedmont Park. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution covers the march and estimates attendance at less than 50; GLF estimates 125.

1972

Over 300 march in the next Gay Pride, which is covered widely by local television. GLF again sponsors the event, but dissolves the next year. Charlie St. John is appointed by Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell to the city's Community Relations Commission. He is the city's first openly gay appointee. Pride is viewed by some gay businesses as too radical, and two large gay bars throw out activists distributing Pride fliers.

1973

Gay Pride continues to grow, although some marchers wear paper bags over their heads to demonstrate the dangers of coming out. Gays picket the Atlanta Journal-Constitution after Charlie St. John is fired from his job as a copy carrier for distributing Gay Pride fliers. The GBI searches St. John's apartment on drug charges many believe to be fabricated.

1974

The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, formed in 1972, fields the first openly lesbian softball team to play in the city league, and helps coordinate Lesbian & Gay Pride Day.

1975

Local gay media outlets founded in the year before now cover Pride, with attendance estimated at 600. The Barb bills itself as "the groovy newspaper covering Atlanta and the Southeast"; Cruise is a gay bar guide.

1976

Gay Pride celebrates the theme "Christopher St. South" with 1,000 marchers. Mayor Maynard Jackson issues a "Gay Pride Day" proclamation. Angry conservatives form Citizens for a Decent Atlanta, call for Jackson's resignation, and take out large newspaper ads claiming the proclamation encourages "acts against the moral laws of Judeo-Christian tradition."

The Gay Pride Planning Committee renames itself the Gay Rights Alliance, and although there was often tension between radical activists like GLF and more mainstream groups like gay churches around the first Pride marches, members of the new group include the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, Dykes for a Second American Revolution, the Metropolitan Community Church, Dignity (gay Catholics) and Integrity (gay Episcopalians).

1977

Stung by controversy from the year before, Mayor Jackson issues a "Human Rights Week" proclamation instead of "Gay Pride." About 1,500 attend Pride, in which the Gay Rights Alliance carries a banner calling for national gay rights legislation and an Atlanta gay rights ordinance (not passed until 1986). At Pride, Gil Robison announces the formation of a gay political group, First Tuesday. Suggested chants distributed at the march include "Anita Bryant go away: Gay rights are here to stay" — a reference to the controversial orange juice queen turned anti-gay spokesperson.

1978

Anita Bryant doesn't go away, and in fact comes to Atlanta to give the keynote address at the Southern Baptist Convention at the World Congress Center. A protest at Bryant's June 11 visit takes the place of the usual gay Pride celebration, and police estimate 2,000 march on the World Congress Center. Activists place attendance as high as 4,000, and money collected at the rally is used to start the Atlanta Gay Center, which later became the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center.

1979

Pride is put together by those helping organize the First National March on Washington for Lesbian & Gay Rights. Ten years after the Stonewall Riots, Pride's theme is "Lavender Anniversary." Events include the first gay film festival at the Metropolitan Community Church and an open mike at the Pride rally. Estimated attendance ranges from 700 to 1,000.

1980

A new decade brings a new name for Gay Pride, now dubbed "Lesbian Gay Transperson" Pride day—the "LGT" is sometimes also interpreted as "Let's Get Together." Over 1,200 attend. The Gay Atlanta Minorities Association sponsors a rap session on "Black Lesbian/Gay/Transperson survival in the '80s." Pride's theme is "International Gay Solidarity Day."

1981

LGT Pride attempts to advertise on MARTA. The fundraising and publicity committee reports that initial discussions are "positive," but MARTA officials later refuse to allow the words "lesbian, gay, transperson" and suggest "free-thinking, free-spirited persons" instead. LGT Pride events include a street festival on 7th Street and a march from Piedmont Park to City Hall; an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 attend. The Gay Atlanta Minorities Association boycotts Pride, citing racism. But survival soon takes on a whole new meaning: The Georgia Department of Human Resources begins tracking AIDS cases in the state, and three are reported.

1982

Pride's theme is "Stonewall Then, Atlanta Now," and 4,000 participate in a rally at the State Capitol; there is also a carnival on Peachtree Place. The Atlanta City Council issues a Lesbian Gay Transperson Pride proclamation without the signature of Mayor Andrew Young, who contends approval is not needed for "private sexual practices."

1983

Pride theme is "Out Front, Out Loud, Outstanding," and the first "Stop AIDS" banner appears in the march. Attendance appears to drop, estimated by police at 2,000. The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance hosts a candlelight Dyke March from Candler Park to Little Five Points; the event will be resurrected 10 years later. Headline in the June 26, 1983, issue of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "Gays becoming key factor in city politics."

1984

Lesbian/Gay Pride parade and rally takes place on July 3, with the theme "Once more, with feeling." This time, Mayor Andrew Young obliges with a "Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Day" proclamation. Speakers include Sonia Johnson, an ex-Mormon feminist and third party presidential candidate. Attendance estimated at 1,500.

1985

Mayor Andrew Young proclaims first Gay Pride Week in Atlanta; the first community memorial for those who have died of AIDS is held. Attendance remains steady.

1986

Pride theme is "Forward Together" as speakers gather on the steps of the state capitol; most of the organizers are also working on the Second National March on Washington, which takes place the next year. Coke reportedly offers two trailers for the rally, until the company finds out the subject; then Coke offers to donate ice cream, safely without the corporate logo. (Ten years later, in 1996, Coke will become a major corporate sponsor of Pride). The week's events include a statewide gay rights conference, picnic in the park, women's softball, and gay church and atheist events, but only about 2,000 participate on the actual Pride day.

Please see TIMELINE on Page 46

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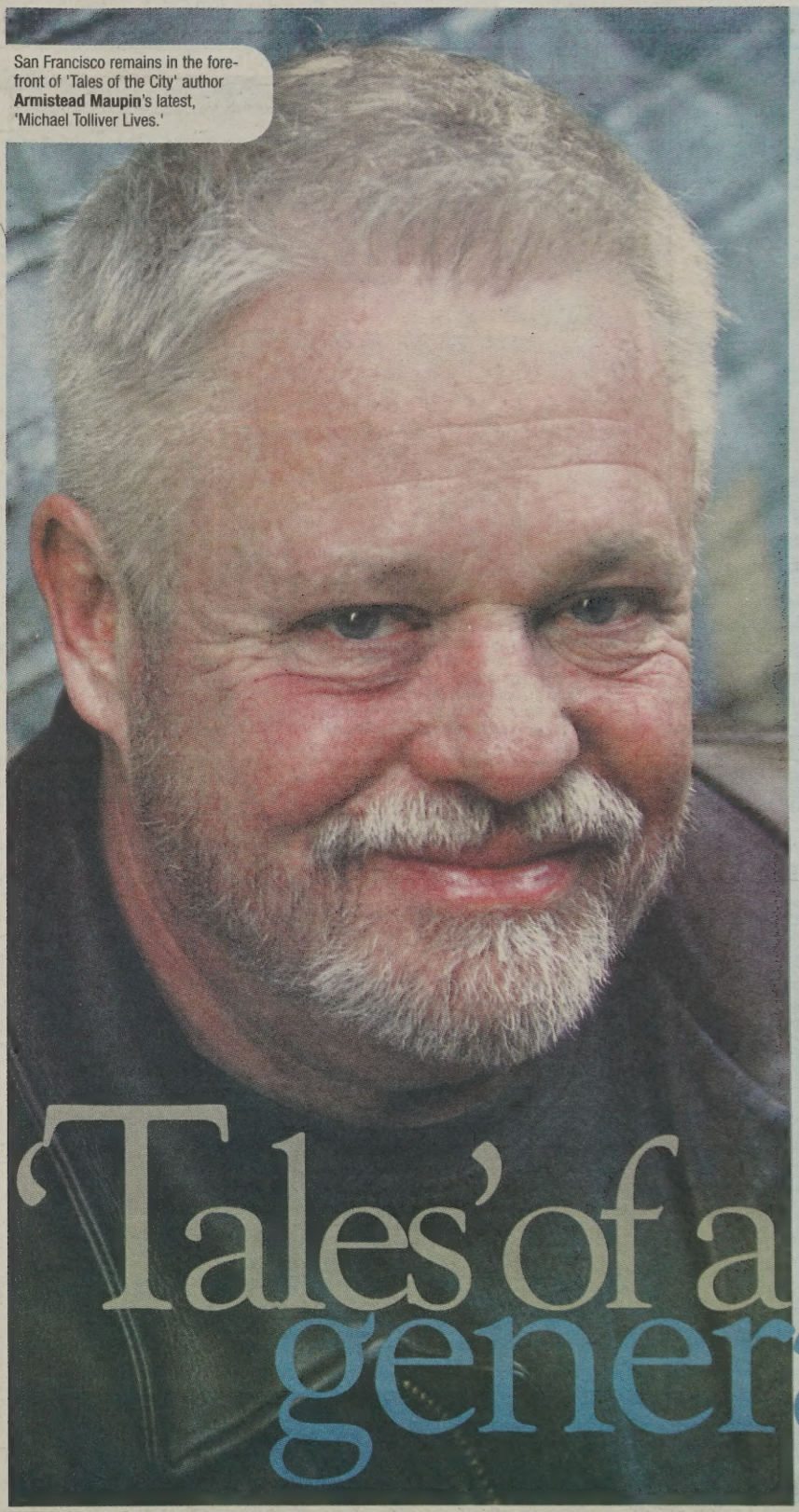

San Francisco remains in the forefront of 'Tales of the City' author **Armistead Maupin**'s latest, 'Michael Tolliver Lives.'

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'Tales' of a generation

Armistead Maupin and his famous gay character are 'survivors of the '70s'

ARMISTEAD MAUPIN HAS SETTLED NICELY INTO HIS ROLE as elder statesman of all things gay, and he isn't even that old.

At least as many people know Maupin, 62, through his commentary for documentaries and television specials about topics of gay interest as do the millions who discovered him through his "Tales of the City" novels.

"I'm happy to hold forth on the subject of being gay," he laughs. "I've tried to testify about our condition. That's what my life has been about."

AIDS was the condition that almost prevented Maupin from revisiting the "Tales" novels after "Sure of You," in 1989.

Then he discontinued the series because he would have been forced to write a death scene for Michael Tolliver, the sweet, southern gay man whose follies lit up the first six "Tales" books. Michael learned he was HIV positive in "Sure of You."

But then, something — actually, a lot of things — began to change. The "Tales" novels were loved for their drama, but also for the prescient way in which they captured the eras in which they were set. By the late 1990s, Maupin realized that the world around him was one he could still capture — and more importantly, one in which Michael Tolliver could thrive.

"Well, the world changed, didn't it? Protease

Please see **MAUPIN** on **Page 79**

MondoHomo, Page 81 • Lesbian anthology, Page 84 • Post-Pride events, Page 94

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'Tales' character helps chronicle gay men's aging

MAUPIN, continued from **Page 77**

inhibitors came along, and AIDS was no longer a certain death sentence," the author says. "And one day, I looked around and saw that so many of my friends were still alive and functioning, and it occurred to me that Michael would be as well."

As a 55-year-old HIV-positive gay man in "Michael Tolliver Lives," the title character grapples with issues eerily similar to the ones he had in his 20s in the first "Tales" novels. He has false starts with his self-esteem, wonders if he is desirable, and deals with concerns about his relationship with his partner, Ben.

"MICHAEL TOLLIVER LIVES" IS NOT, ACCORDING to Maupin, a continuation of the "Tales of the City" series. In the first place, it's told from Michael's first person point of view. Also, while familiar "Tales" faces return, the story is wholly about Michael.

"I thought that people who were used to the old format — following multiple plot lines in third person — would be disappointed when they arrived at a novel that was different," Maupin says. "I wanted to dig deeper into Michael, and first-person seemed the way to do it.

"I made a point of saying that it was not a continuation of the serial, but in fact, it is a continuation of the story," he explains.

The close parallels between character and creator are obvious. Maupin and Michael are gay men of the same generation, from similar backgrounds, who both came out early in a time when they could expect little, if any, acceptance.

Maupin is HIV negative, but his current life continues to mirror Michael's in a number of ways.

Both Ben, Michael's fictional partner, and Christopher Turner, Maupin's real-life husband, are about 30 years younger than their partners.

The relationships raise eyebrows on the page and in reality.

"I think people make all sorts of assumptions, but they don't bother me because Chris and I always see the purity and the rightness of what we have," Maupin says.

He defends Turner, a website owner and developer, against any notion that the younger man is dependent upon Maupin for more than love and companionship.

"His income is at least at the level mine is now," Maupin says.

In the book, Michael got Ben because, as Maupin sees it, what's good for the author is good for the page.

"I thought there was a lot of humor and heart that could be mined for fiction," he says.

IN "MICHAEL TOLLIVER LIVES," READERS CAN expect an up-close and personal look at life through the eyes of a middle aged gay man — a viewpoint largely squelched because of the many voices silenced by AIDS.

Maupin made the "Tales" stories timely and long lasting by writing them as honestly as he could, he says. He continues his tradition of pulling no punches in "MTL," which includes telling depictions of sickness, death, heartache and sex.

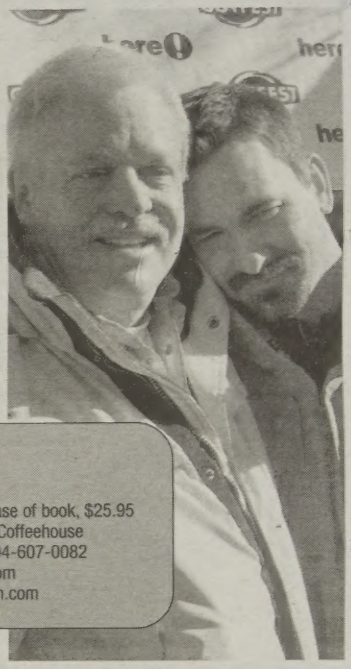
"If I was trying to paint a cozy view of gay life that made it the same thing as heterosexual life, I certainly wouldn't have included that three way," the author says, referring to a moment when Ben and Michael open their hotel bedroom to a new friend.

Book-buyers don't seem to be put-off. The book is charting a steady trajectory up best-seller lists since its June 12 release.

"I love the notion of a story that's so thoroughly queer being embraced by mainstream America," Maupin says. "I've always enjoyed writing about all of humanity, but in this instance, I wanted to celebrate Michael, and the people who have lived his life for so long."

If few voices like Maupin's remain, then he says he's even more obligated to tell the story of people similar to him.

"The truth is attractive enough," he says. "I think gay people have always had a lot to offer the world."



Armistead Maupin drew on his May-December relationship with partner **Christopher Turner** to inform 'Michael Tolliver Lives.'

MORE INFO
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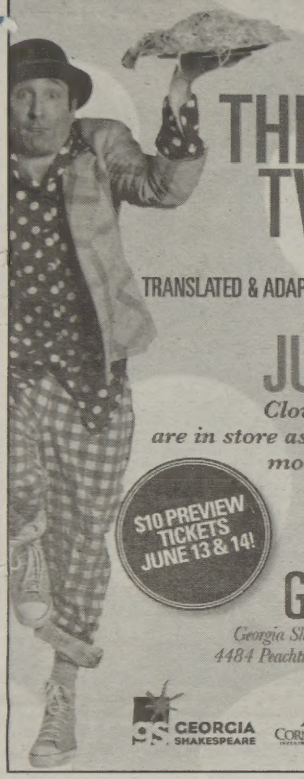

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First U.S. Social Forum includes sexual identity rights

Local activists to 'queer' confab expected to attract 10,000 people from across nation

By DYANA BAGBY
dbagby@sovo.com

Three days after Atlanta Pride ends, thousands of community organizers and activists arrive in the city for the first U.S. Social Forum that will tackle social and economic justice issues including rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Organizers of the USSF are expecting at least 10,000 people from as far away as Alaska and Guam to converge in Atlanta June 27-July 1. With the theme "Another World is Possible, Another U.S. is Necessary," those attending the forum represent community, national and international organizations, and plan to speak out on issues they say politicians and the government often ignore.

"We will be discussing every conceivable topic — the environment, housing, the war in Iraq, Katrina, education, healthcare, workers' rights," says Alice Lovelace, USSF national lead organizer.

"You look at the course of the world and we're heading toward an oligarchy. The primary reason to have this forum is to return society back to the people."

The USSF is an outgrowth of the World Social Forum, a gathering of activists that has grown from 15,000 to more than 150,000 people since the first meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001.

The WSF was formed for individuals and organizations to find ways together to achieve social, peace and economic justice, Lovelace says.

The last World Social Forum was held in January and attracted 75,000 participants to Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme, "People's Struggles, People's Alternatives."

Numerous regional social forums across the U.S. have been held leading up to the USSF in Atlanta, Lovelace says. Atlanta was selected to host the first USSF because of its long history in the civil rights movement.

"The South has seen lots of repression and lots of resistance," says National Planning Committee member Jerome Scott.

The U.S. Social Forum will focus on six key struggles, Lovelace says. They are: Gulf Coast Reconstruction in the Post-Katrina Era; War, Militarism and the Prison Industrial Complex; Indigenous Voices: From the Heart of Mother Earth; Immigrant and Migrant Rights in a Global Society; Liberating Gender and Sexuality: Integrating Gender and Sexual Justice Across Our Movements; and Workers' Rights in the Global Economy.

About 900 workshops are planned, with expectations for 25 to 30 workshops to be organized "on the spot" each day, Lovelace says.

According to Lovelace, it was important to include gender and sexuality, including gay rights, because these human issues are often used as wedge issues to drive communities apart.

"[GLBT] issues will be discussed at this forum more than any other social forum," Lovelace adds.

"We want to speak what we are in favor of, not what we oppose," she says. "And when we gather in groups, we show we are mightier than politics and politicians."

PRIDE GOERS URGED TO ATTEND USSF

Taking part in the USSF will be Atlanta's own Queer Progressive Agenda, founded by Deepali Gokhale, with the mission of broadening what she said is the mainstream gay rights movement that primarily focuses on issues such as marriage, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

"The U.S. Social Forum is in line with QPA's mission," she says. "We want to look at things through an intersectional lens and move beyond the gay rights agenda."

And while QPA is inclusive of marriage equality, eliminating DADT and implementing ENDA, the organization wants to take a more holistic approach.

"We don't want to look at everything from just the gay rights point of view," Gokhale says. "Most of us have more than a gay agenda — we are women, people of color, working class and poor. We are interested in how all forms of oppression are connected, not just a single issue."

Joining QPA in "queering the forum" will be Southerners on New Ground and ZAMI, Atlanta's group for lesbians of African descent. As part of QPA's presence at the USSF, the group plans to stage a reenactment of the Stonewall Riots during USSF's Opening March on June 27.

A dress rehearsal of the reenactment will take place during the Atlanta Pride parade on June 24 and a USSF contingent will march in the Pride parade.

QPA will also host a workshop at the USSF on its Transgender People of Color Workers Project that was formed to help trans sex workers find legal, sustainable employment, Gokhale says.

"I really hope that people who come to Pride will then come to the USSF the following week," Gokhale adds.

"I think it's important for gay people to be involved in these conversations [on poverty, the environment, Katrina relief] so other folks will see us outside a single [gay] issue and take us more seriously.

"It is good to have curiosity and to have a queer presence in these conversations. We want to move queer politics to the left, but also go into these progressive communities so queer people are not left out," she says.

People dance during the Jan. 20 opening of the World Social Forum in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. The first U.S. Social Forum, an outgrowth of the WSF, will be held in Atlanta June 27-July 1. (Photo by Karel Prinsloo/AP)

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MondoHomo adds queer rhythm to revolution

'Dirty South' fest brings homo hip hop, other artists to Atlanta days after Pride

By RYAN LEE
rlee@sovo.com

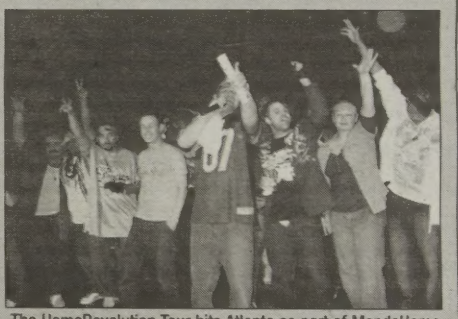
Visiting a gay bookstore during a recent trip to Seattle, Nikki Chotas realized that buzz is building around her big queer idea of starting "a revolution you can dance to."

Chotas overheard a couple of customers talking about making a cross-country trip to check out MondoHomo — a five-day gay indie music and arts festival Chotas concocted with fellow Atlanta lesbian Kiki Carr. Strategically scheduled after Gay Pride and alongside the U.S. Social Forum, MondoHomo features dozens of independent artists at various bars and venues throughout intown Atlanta from June 27 through July 1.

"We thought, there'll be all these progressive activists in town [for the U.S. Social Forum], it will be right after Pride, all this energy will be there — now is the time to do it," Carr says of the early brainstorming sessions for MondoHomo.

After experiencing gay music events like the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and hearing about the Homo-A-GoGo concert series in Olympia, Wash., Carr and Chotas wanted to bring a similar gathering of artists to Atlanta — while adding a little local flavor to the standard recipe for queer music confabs.

"We've paid a lot of attention and tried to make this as diverse a festival as possible, and it's coming to fruition," says Carr, who is particularly excited about MondoHomo featuring the HomoRevolution Tour — a collection of gay rappers from across the country.



The HomoRevolution Tour hits Atlanta as part of MondoHomo on June 29.

"Atlanta is Ground Zero for hip hop — it's so ingrained in the culture here, and it's such a fertile bed for hip hop," Carr says. "I'm really interested to see how Atlanta's going to welcome [the gay hip hop performers] and how those people will like the South."

Jose Ramirez Jr. — AKA Bigg Nugg — has never been to Atlanta or the South, but says he can't wait for MondoHomo and the HomoRevolution show at MJQ nightclub on June 29.

The Ohio-based rapper says he appreciates the egalitarian environment MondoHomo is promoting.

"I don't think there's really one headliner — everyone holds equal ground," he says.

Please see MONDO HOMO on Page 82

SOVO SOUTHERN VOICE COMMUNITY

MONDAY, JUNE 25

Showtime and PBA air three **gay documentaries:** 'Semper Fi,' about a gay Marine, on Showtime, and 'Why We Sing,' about gay choruses, including the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus, and the latest edition of 'In the Life' on PBA. 'Semper Fi': 8:30 p.m. on Showtime. www.sho.com. 'Sing' and 'Life': 10 p.m. on PBA30. www.pba.org

TUESDAY, JUNE 26

The AGLCC hosts a **Business Builder Lunch.** 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. at Rock Bottom Brewery Buckhead, 3242 Peachtree Road. www.atlanta-gaychamber.org

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27

'Advancing our cause'

Rentas, Schmeling tapped as Pride grand marshals

By ZACK HUDSON and SHANNON JENKINS

Aida Rentas, a longtime Atlanta gay rights activist, said she is 'humbled' by being selected as a grand marshal this year.

ALONE, THEY EACH STOOD OUT, AND UP, FOR their own rights. Together, they represent the triumphs and struggles of gay men and lesbians in Atlanta and everywhere else. As spectators numbering in the tens of thousands cheer them on, Aida Rentas and Bradley Schmeling will lead thousands more marchers as grand marshals of the 2007 Atlanta Pride parade.

Each year, as the Atlanta Pride Committee begins nailing down the preliminary details of the annual three-day celebration, it calls on community members to nominate parade grand marshals. With exceptions for honorary representatives, Pride parade grand marshals must be openly gay or transgender Georgia residents. For the 2007 parade, the committee boiled down the nominations to one female and one male marshal pick.

"We gauge what these folks have done within the Atlanta and Georgia communities to advance our cause," explains Atlanta Pride Committee Executive Director Donna Narducci.

AIDA RENTAS

As the oldest of seven children growing up in New York City, Aida Rentas began her lifelong journey as an outspoken pioneer and advocate.

She was the first to learn English in her Spanish-speaking household and assumed the role of interpreter for her entire family.

"My mother came from Puerto Rico, and she didn't speak English. My father [a white Puerto Rican] didn't speak English," Rentas recalls. "So I had to defend my brothers and sisters and be the leader, even for my mother and father."

Later in life, as an out lesbian, Rentas stepped up to defend herself and her community.

"It was a crime to go to a gay club," Rentas, 68, says of her

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Activist recovering from Pride night accident

by KC WILDMOON

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Rentas had left the park on Saturday night after a rainstorm, heading out to dinner with friends. She was driving alone, north on Peachtree.

"All of a sudden I see this big red truck pull out and across," Rentas recalled. "For a second I didn't worry because I thought he was turning right, but he was going clear across and turning left."

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"Before that, I never knew pain," she said. "And then I hear this voice saying 'Aida, it's OK, we're here, you're being taken care of.'"

A half a dozen gay men and lesbians stopped to take care of their own. Rentas was taken to Northside Hospital, and her shattered knee was knit back together in the operating room on June 29. A second surgery will take place in six months.

Rentas is home now, and her mother is helping take care of her.

"She's leaving on August 2," Rentas said. "And then I'll be using these phone numbers I've got."

Rentas is one of the Atlanta lesbian and gay community's most active members—she is president of Latinos en Acción and treasurer of Lesbians Over 50, serves on the board of directors of the Georgia Equality Project, is one of Mayor Bill Campbell's senior advisors and an advisory committee member for the Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation's lesbian/gay youth initiative, works with numerous other organizations, and just opened a business called Obvious Choices in Avondale Estates.

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Aida Rentas

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"Thank God for the telephone calls," she said, "because I have to stop crying to talk. But I'm a strong person. I'll get through this."

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"We see evidence that our image within the gay community is improving," Castleberry said in an interview. "But there is still work to be done. There are lingering views that cannot disappear overnight."

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tion, as reason for distrust.

MondoHomo puts focus on queer indie art

The antics of **Team Gina** are among five days of more than 70 acts during MondoHomo.

MONDO HOMO, continued from **Page 81**

'TOUR IS SO DIVERSE'

Homos in hip hop face hurdles gaining credibility their counterparts in the genre and garnering attention among some gay music fans .

"It's like, no, that doesn't really exist," Bigg Nugg says of the perception of gay rappers.

The Atlanta leg of the HomoRevolution Tour — a national tour of queer hip hop artists — includes Bigg Nugg, Deadlee, Feloni, Tori Fixx, Shorty Roc, JFP and Foxxjazell.

"What we're bringing with this tour is so diverse," says Bigg Nugg, noting that the MondoHomo line-up includes black, white, Latino, lesbian and transgender rappers.

"We all have the same vision — not so much to be rappers, but to take it upon ourselves to speak for gay people on every level," Bigg Nugg says.

MONDO HOMO & USSF

MondoHomo partners with the U.S. Social Forum on June 29 to present a panel discussion on gays and hip hop, as well as a forum on the intermingling of sex, queer relationships and politics.

On June 28, MondoHomo hosts a Social Forum workshop on "radical queer elders" that will feature Jayne County, a transgender Georgia native who participated in the Stonewall Riots and was influential in New York's underground music scene in the '70s.

County recently delighted Carr and several other local queers by offering an oral history of what it was like to be at Stonewall.

"People were literally in tears — it was so moving to hear our history from somebody who's still politically radical and active in the community," Carr says.

In addition to about 70 acts over five days, MondoHomo also features opening and closing night parties, art exhibits, and a street festival with a carnival theme among other events.

MONDOHOMO LINEUP
www.mondohomo.com

WEDNESDAY JUNE 27
Mondo Art Opening, 7 p.m.
My Sisters' Room
1271 Glenwood Ave.

Mondo Blastoff, 9 p.m.
The Earl, $10
488 Flat Shoals Road
Team Gina, KIN, One Hand Loves the Other, Akil, Natalie Ilium, DJ Va Jay Jay

Mary's, $5
1287 Glenwood Ave.
Paul Mercer, Fagatrons, team heat wave, Johnny Mae, Akil, DJ Hawg-Tied, MC 5-hr Boner.

THURSDAY JUNE 28
Speak Your Mondo, 7 p.m.
Tower II Lounge, $10
735 Ralph McGill Blvd.
PhoeniX YZ, Ami Mattison, Amber Dawn, Bad Kat, DJ Vick of Traxx, Lot Six, Dr. Madelyn Hatter, Theresa Davis, Beki Buchanan, Adriana, Stacie Boschma, Corey Houlihan, Sam Martin, Dustin Brookshire, Karen G, kathleen delaney

Mondo Moxie Cabaret, 9 p.m.
Lenny's Bar
307 Memorial Drive
Cakalak Thunder drum corp, Ms. Cherry Galette, Leroi the Girl Boi, Karissa the Pole Dancer, Destiny Brooks, Alice D, Diego Wolf, Penasco Theatre Collective, Bois 2 Men, Chica Boom, Dixie Pistols, Good N' Plenty, Al Schlong, Pilou Miller, Heywood Wakefield, DJ Fearless

FRIDAY JUNE 29
MondoElectro, 9 p.m.
Drunken Unicorn, $10
736 Ponce de Leon Ave.
Nicky Click, Small Framed Boy, Jeremy Gloff, Johnny Rocket, Dino Felipé's Finess + Runway, Can Can

MondoHop, 11 p.m.
MJQ, $10
736 Ponce de Leon Ave.
HomoRevolution Crew: Tori Fixx, Deadlee, Feloni, Bigg Nugg, FoxxJazell, JFP, Shorty Roc, DJ of the Da Doo-Dirty Podcast, Jason Jupiter + Tom Tom, Yvonne Monet, Haute Couture.

SATURDAY JUNE 30
Mondo Cirqus, 4 p.m.
Lenny's Bar, Free
Queer Art & Crafts Fair, Team Gina, All-Girl Skateboarding Demo by Skate Like a Girl and Woody's Half-Pipe GirlCrew, interactive Jell-O Trampoline installation by Lindsey Frandsen, Giddy-up Helicopter.

Lenny's Bar, 8 p.m., $10
Katastrophe, Rising Appalachia, The Shondes, RoboSapien, Athens Boys Choir, Collin Kelley, Heywood Wakefield, MC 5-Hour Boner, DJ Business Casual.

SUNDAY JULY 1
Mondo Revolution, 4 p.m.
Eyedrum Gallery, $5
290 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.
PinkEye Film Shorts, Jayne County + the Sexual Side Effects, Hawg-Tied, MC 5-Hour Boner, DJ Business Casual, Dr. Katz, Fearless, DJ Va Jay Jay, DJ Duck

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Avondale shop "incubates" gay businesses

by Rob Nixon

Avondale Estates, Ga. – "We're always talking about community and sharing resources and helping each other. This is a chance to put together all those things," says Aida Rentas. A well-known lesbian activist, Rentas has combined her experience in business with her vision for community organizing to create opportunities for those who want to start their own business but don't have the resources or backing usually needed.

Last June she obtained space for an eclectic gift and curio shop in downtown Avondale Estates. Her dream of having her own store was briefly sidelined, however, by a car accident that, six months later, still has her getting around slowly with a cane. When she finally got the shop, called Obvious Choices, up and running, she decided to make it an "incubator" for gay-owned businesses.

Currently, she rents space to seven other merchants, artists and craftspeople – all gay. Rentas runs the store, keeps the books and helps the others manage their portion of the shop, sharing her experience in business and accounting. Four of the merchants are women; four are people of color. Most maintain other jobs while getting their ventures off the ground.

"These are people who couldn't be in business if they didn't have something like this," Rentas explains and adds with a laugh, "I want to call Jesse Helms and tell him, 'See, we're not all on welfare.'"

The merchants sell a little of everything, from spiritual oils and healing herbs to handmade gourd items to detailed replicas of Southern vernacular architecture (including a shotgun house and Elvis' birth home) by Vinson McKenzie, founder of the African-American Institute of Architectural History. Rentas says she would be thrilled if any of them were able to build a business they could take out on their own.

"I'd love that! I might even give diplomas after they learn the ropes and move on – the Obvious Choices School of Business," she says. The shop is also doing it's part for gay visibility.

"Customers get to see we're gay and that's cool with them," she says. "At first I thought, Avondale? But it's amazing how much of our community lives out this way."

Rentas – president of Latinos en Accion, a board member of the Georgia Equality Project and one of the mayor's senior advisors – would like to turn the large storefront's back rooms, where she now lives, into a meeting place for community groups and events.

"We're not just building business here. We're building a relationship, a family, too," she says proudly.

NON-CONTROVERSY ERUPTS AT KENNESAW STATE

Reports of a stir over a gay literature course at Kennesaw State College have been greatly exaggerated, according to the course's professor. "One homophobic person in the English Department sent an anonymous letter to the *Marietta Daily Journal* opposing the course," explained Dr. Greg Johnson. "There's no controversy. I proposed this over three years ago. It went through committee with no opposition." Two days after the "controversy" broke on Dec. 9, 360 Kennesaw faculty members attended a day-long awareness seminar on religion, race and sexual orientation issues. Some attendees expressed negative reactions to the workshop, but Johnson said it was unconnected to his course, having been planned months ago. The Marietta paper, however, did seek the opinion of Cobb County Commission Chair Bill Byrne, who has staunchly defended th county's anti-gay resolution. On Dec. 1 Byrne backed the college's right to offer th course, even though he has opposed goverr ment endorsement of "gay lifestyles." Accor ing to Byrne, education – even in the case c publicly funded school like Kennesaw – is "a form of government." Johnson says his ter-semester course, which covers gay wr from Oscar Wilde to Camille Paglia, is alr half-full in pre-registration, and he expect reach capacity.

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Aida Rentas: Before

The might and influence of a Puerto Rican woman of color on the move is what most Atlantans have experienced in the person of Ms. Aida Rentas since she conquered this city some eight years ago. Her own personal clothing style is relaxed but fitted and tasteful and compliments her buxom shorter frame. Miss Aida, as she is known, dresses for her own comfort because she is the shopkeeper and owner of Obvious Choices, a cooperative boutique of all kinds of previously owned and new collectibles.

Loved the cropped jacket as it lengthens her from the waist down and is a stylish option for women who want the look that the younger girls are wearing with cropped, cut-off, trimmed, and barely there tops. It also will go with a skirt for you boys and girls who wear them.

Aida: After

She seduced the City of Atlanta's entire lesbigay and transgendered community. Why not feature her in the most casual of attire. Miss Aida, very simply- YOU Better Work.

Moi - Before

When you know there is going to be an "after" you try real hard to make the "before" look as good as you can. I try very hard these days to dress appropriate to the situation, but in comfort. Pants when needed at other times skirts if asked. At work I can dress the way I am pictured or with more a business look. I am the Research Coordinator for Dr. Julia Perilla's study of domestic violence in Latino Families housed at Georgia State University. The University asks that the staff distinguish ourselves in manner of dress from the students. Well we try.

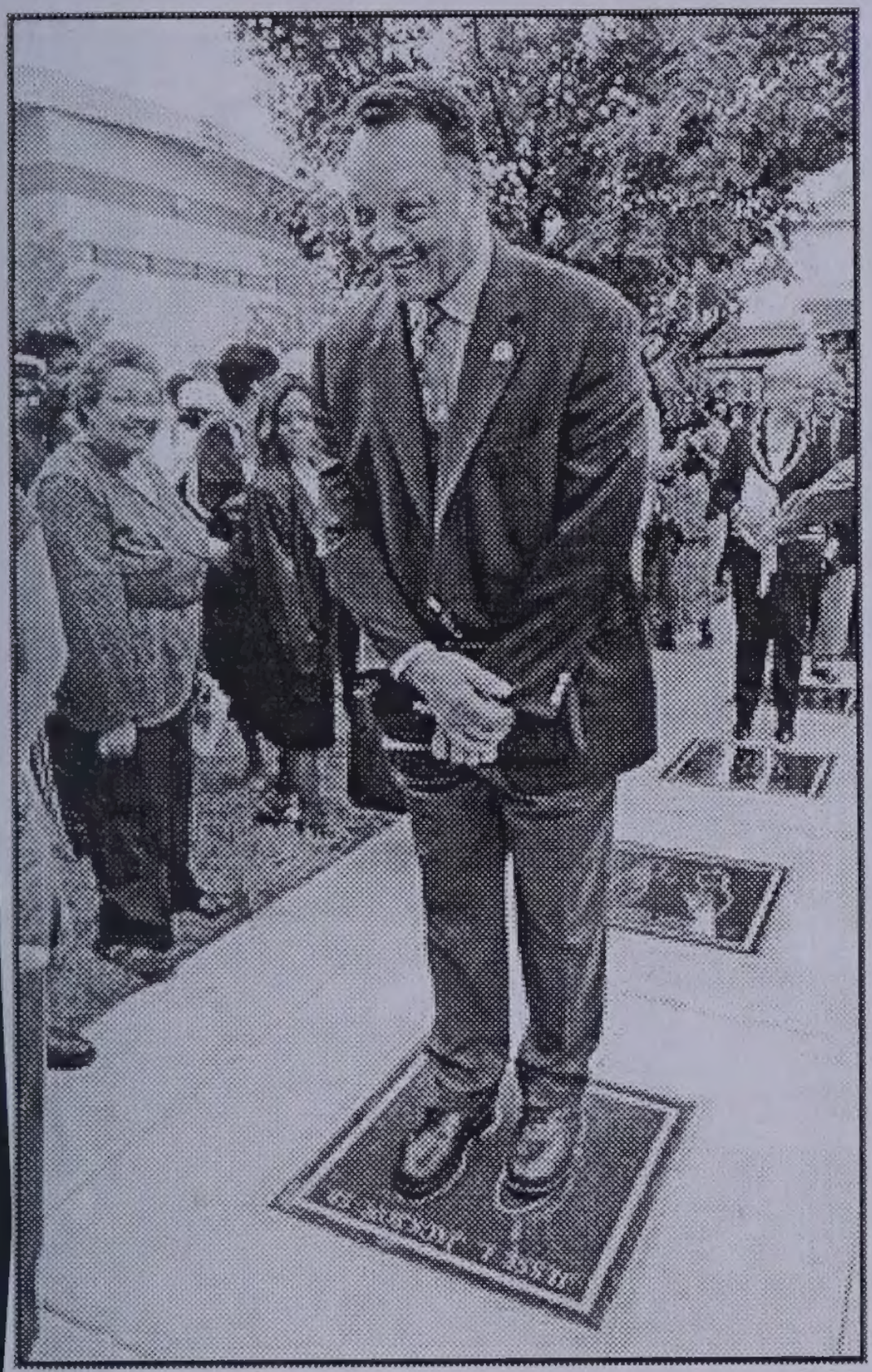
Ms. Amethyst Pryde

My life has changed and the editor chose the look that best suits my life now. Well, these days I am not required so much to wear an ACT-UP t-shirt. Though, I never really wore one, I did wear the Pride Board t-shirt for years. I do currently live, though very recently moved in with my lover, in an area of the city that is not exactly Atlanta proper, not really even Decatur proper, as it were.

The dress is actually a Carolina Herrera with gold buttons and it was a good steal at only $10.99 from the Cathedral of St. Philip Thrift House. The casserole, Chicken Divan, is real and somewhat low-fat. And the silver is real, too for you catty, jealous types. I do find myself entertaining at a dinner table far more than I find myself at community meetings these days. It is not nearly as scary as I imagined.

Enjoy the summer and be Pridefully well dressed wherever you are.

*I was never arrested but observed the dress of my ACT-UP and Queer Nation clad friends as they bravely went to the pokey.



Joey Ivansco/AJC

WALK OF FAME

Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., stands in his footprint Tuesday during the unveiling of the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame at the Martin Luther King Jr., National Historic site in Atlanta. Seventeen inductees were given footprints. The actual shoes worn by the inductees are also on view.

Related story